

Israelis moving out of Gaza and Jericho amid confusion

DEIR AL BALAH (AP) — Tuesday was moving day for the army in the Gaza Strip town of Deir Al Balah.

Soldiers made farewell photographs and loaded cabinets, chairs, desks and a still cold refrigerator onto a semi-trailer in the courtyard of the Israeli military government's headquarters.

After 27 years of occupation, changes on the ground that Palestinian leaders have been demanding are finally starting to take shape, not only here but at other sites in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

But for young militants, in particular, dismantling bases is too little to be convincing. Soldiers still patrol the streets, and Palestinians remain wary of Israel's intentions — especially since the army is building new outposts to guard Jewish settlements which will not be uprooted.

So even though the moving was a visible sign of Israel's intent to leave, Palestinian youths with slingshots arched stones that bounced off the walls and olive drab jeeps. Two jeeps gave chase, firing plastic bullets and teargas, wounding two Arabs.

"We don't want peace. There will be stones every day," shouted Palestinian youths, many aligned with Hamas that opposes the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace-making. Soldiers blamed the outburst of violence on the arrival of photographers, but some appeared bewildered about why the Palestinians were throwing stones while they were pulling up stakes. "They don't want us to leave," asked one.

Confusing prevailed in the streets, as well. Soldiers kept loading the trailer during the melee. Women walked

through Israeli lines carrying bundles of wash, and a Muslim fundamentalist dressed in white with a black beard bicycled unnoticed between the soldiers as they knelt to shoot at demonstrators 50 metres away. Arab cars tried to edge their way around army vehicles.

Major Udi, a military commander in Deir Al Balah, said his unit was being moved to guard settlers in Gush Katif, the bloc of Jewish settlements in Gaza where over 4,000 settlers live.

The major said that even while the army formally was still in full control, his soldiers had orders not to patrol in the nearby refugee camps of Bureij, Nuseirat and Mughazi unless absolutely necessary.

"We are not going in because we know the sensitivity of conducting patrols inside the camps," said Maj. Udi, identified only by his first name according to army regulations. "We are in a period of transition, and we are trying to avoid confrontation."

Israel and the PLO resumed accelerated talks in Cairo on Monday. Chief PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath said he expected an agreement soon on the size and deployment timetable of the Palestinian police force to patrol the autonomous areas.

But a trip expected Monday by senior officers to inspect Gaza facilities was postponed. About 300 police are due to deploy in the autonomous areas by Thursday for administrative purposes. Up to 50 expellees were due to cross into the occupied areas from Jordan and Egypt starting Tuesday.

At a seaside army base in Gaza City, soldiers emptied mobile homes and moved them onto trucks. Equipment is either being trucked to Israel or to the Gush Katif bloc of Jewish settlements, where troops are to be posted once

autonomy begins.

At the future Palestinian police headquarters, Arab workers planted flowers out front and began paving a parking lot.

Similar scenes took place in Jericho, where Palestinian youths hurled stones as flatbed trucks pulled up outside police headquarters to remove equipment for the second day. Palestinians staged a large protest in the streets nearby, hurling stones at troops who detained three Arabs.

Sach Erekat, a PLO negotiator in Jericho, explained the continued protests as an expression of Palestinian doubts. "While they're leaving buildings in Jericho, the army is building new positions outside of town. People are cautious about the steps Israelis are taking and want to see whether they are just moving from one place to another," Mr. Erekat told the Associated Press.

Sufian Abu Zayda, the PLO spokesman in Gaza, said there was full cooperation between the army and the PLO on the redeployment and handover of buildings to the Palestinian police.

Mr. Abu Zayda said the troop movements were good for Palestinian morale. "It is clear that in a few days, we will not see Israeli forces here... that shows that the agreement is starting to be implemented on the ground," he said.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told his cabinet Sunday the troops received orders to complete the pullout within five days once Israel and the PLO sign an autonomy accord, officials said.

Environmental Minister Yossi Sarid, who has been a top negotiator for Israel, said he expected the agreement to be reached by the end of April and the army withdrawal to be completed in early May.



Israeli soldiers smile as they empty the army headquarters in the Gaza City on Tuesday (AFP photo)

Gaza settlers want transfer into Israel

DUGIT, occupied Gaza Strip (AP) — Residents of this small, isolated Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip demanded Monday to be moved to safety in Israel and set up a tent camp within Israel in show of protest.

The settlers said they were afraid for their lives once Palestinian autonomy is implemented in Gaza, expected within weeks.

"Our security is deteriorating daily and last Friday a resident was shot at near the entrance to the settlement and miraculously not injured," said Dugit settler Yoram Ravitzki, speaking on Israel army radio.

"The majority want to move the settlement to a safer place," said Mr. Ravitzki, adding that Dugit was the only Jewish settlement in Gaza without a protective fence around it.

Six of the 18 Dugit families set up three tents on a beach just inside Israel on Sunday evening. On Monday, only one

and three people were left. The others returned to Dugit, a fishing village set up four years ago.

The government has refused to discuss assistance to settlers in moving back to Israel until after the accord on Palestinian autonomy is implemented. Under the accord, settlements are to remain during the five-year interim autonomy period.

But hundreds of settlers have said they want to move back to Israel now. They have demanded compensation from the government, saying their homes have lost much of their value and that they cannot afford to rent or buy comparable houses in Israel.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, asked about the future of Dugit, said Monday that the government did not "force them to evacuate and therefore does not have to pay."

He said that the government could not deal with compensation on an individual basis.

"The government must take a decision that will be for everyone," he told army radio.

Also Monday, two influential rabbis issued religious rulings that gave boost to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin who has been under relentless attack from the right-wing opposition for suggesting he may dismantle settlements in the future.

The furor began after several cabinet ministers said Jewish settlers should be moved out of the tense West Bank town of Hebron in the wake of the Feb. 25 mosque massacre. Mr. Rabin said he would not move the 450 settlers "at this stage" but has refused to make a more solid promise that they can stay.

In response, three rabbis close to the pro-settlement National Religious Party ruled that under Jewish law, soldiers are allowed to refuse orders to dismantle settlements.

But Rabbi Eliezer Schach

ruled Monday that it was permissible to move Jews out of certain areas in the "Biblical land of Israel" as long as these areas remain under Jewish control.

Rabbi Schach, who has a large following among Israel's ultra-orthodox Jews, added that it was politically unwise at this time to move settlers, the domestic news agency Itim quoted Schach aides as saying.

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, spiritual leader of Jews in North African descent, ruled there was no ban in Jewish law on moving Jews from one place to another. Rabbi Yosef, whose ultra-orthodox Shas Party is part of Mr. Rabin's ruling coalition, has ruled earlier that it is permissible to give up "parts of the land" if it helps save lives.

Since seizing the West Bank and Gaza in the 1967 Middle East war, Israel has built 144 settlements there with a population of about 125,000.

Sheikh Saad announces cabinet reshuffle plan

KUWAIT (AP) — Urging solidarity in the face of what he described as Iraq's ever-present menace, the crown prince, Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah, announced a cabinet reshuffle Monday.

In a 40-minute nationally televised address, Sheikh Saad, who is also prime minister, said the reshuffle was a necessity "towards realising the country's aims and ambitions."

But he gave no details of the changes, nor a reason, saying he first had to inform the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

The current 16-member cabinet, formed in October 1992 following the first post-Gulf war elections, includes six members of parliament, and there was speculation that

ouster might be diminished. The parliament has become a high-profile forum for criticism of the government and a theatre for calls for greater role for Islam in lawgiving.

"There are some who have been utilising freedom of expression venues... for spreading tension, squabbles and fruitless confrontations," Sheikh Saad said, without naming any names.

"Groups have appeared that are almost forming into parties with activities that spread chaos and split our solidarity," he added.

Political parties are not permitted in Kuwait, although most members of the 50-seat assembly have aligned themselves into "movements" primarily of Islamists, secularists and tribal bedouins.

The legislature is expected to debate in the coming months a constitutional amendment to make Islamic law the main source of its legislation, as proposed by 19 Islamic fundamentalist deputies and other supporters.

In an apparent reference to the amendment, which the emir is authorised to block, the Kuwaiti ruler warned that "any law that proves unsuitable for the coming stage will be changed in the framework of an overall review of laws in all fields."

Sheikh Saad also accused Kuwaiti newspapers of fostering discord, charging that they are "filled with extremism and thought terrorism," that were driving an axe into Kuwaiti society.

The crown prince sought to

drive home his call for unity by playing upon fears that Iraq could attack Kuwait again more than three years after U.S.-led forces liberated the emirate in the Gulf war.

He said Iraq is "still threatening our security and sovereignty by rebuilding its military and regaining its capability for aggression."

He said Kuwait will build more security posts along its disputed border with Iraq and fortify a recently completed protective trench with advanced early warning systems.

Sheikh Saad also called on Kuwaitis to bear their share of the economic burden of cutting the budget deficit caused by the falling oil prices and increased spending on postwar reconstruction.

Saudis turn to local banks for financing for U.S. arms deal

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia has turned to local banks to fund \$1.85 billion of American arms purchases this year to speed up the financing deal, experts said on Tuesday.

But they added that the Saudis may well go to the international market for cash needed next year.

Bankers in Saudi Arabia reported last week that three cash-rich domestic banks — Riyad Bank, National Commercial Bank and Saudi American Bank — were asked to raise the \$1.85 billion loan.

This raised eyebrows among bankers who wondered if the cash-rich government had faced problems in its earlier efforts to raise the funds from international banks.

"The original idea was for international banks to step in but it was less complicated and quicker with Saudi-based banks," said a well-placed Arab expert.

"Instead Saudi Arabia chose to spend the next six months thinking about how to finance the 1995 bill rather than spend the time in talks with the international banks," he added.

Talks to raise the funds on international markets could have taken several months, delaying payments to the U.S. government. This would in turn have affected production and delivery schedules for a wide-variety of arms including

state-of-the-art jet fighters and missiles and battle tanks.

Riyadh agreed with Washington in January to cut its cash commitments for ordered weapons to about \$1.5 billion a year over the next two years and bring down a total \$10 billion arms bill by a \$1 billion without cancelling any orders, experts say.

The agreement affects weapons on order from McDonnell Douglas Corp. Raytheon Co. General Dynamics Corp. General Motors Corp and FMC Corp.

"It just makes it easier and is acceptable to all concerned to go the Saudi Banks. Like this the FMS (U.S. foreign military sales) account will have funds and the programme advances on schedule," said the expert.

If an FMS account dries up, U.S. rules require suspension of delivery and production schedules until new funds are deposited.

Chase Manhattan, Citibank and J.P. Morgan Co. Inc. had originally been approached to raise the money internationally.

The experts said the three institutions are not completely out of the deal. They could be part of plans to finance next year's bill when Riyadh is expected to pay another \$1.5 billion in cash and raise more than \$2 billion on the market. "Saudi Arabia is looking to set up a special purpose corporation which borrows the money, carries the debt on its books and pays the bill for the weapons," one expert said.

"Such an arrangement is not seen as a direct (Saudi Arabian) sovereign loan," he added in a reference to the government's reluctance to borrow in its own name despite a cash-shortage caused by a 20 per cent oil price fall in the past year.

"The banks will make available \$1.85 billion and the kingdom will play about \$1.5 billion for the 1994 U.S. bill," said an Arab expert familiar with Saudi moves to cut the kingdom's cash commitments over the next two years.

According to the agreement to defer payment, Riyadh would reassess the defence programme on a regular basis and could speed it up again if oil prices, close to five-year lows, pick up, official sources said.

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer and exporter, has U.S. arms deals worth about \$30 billion till the end of the century. It has announced a 20 per cent cut in its 1994 budget, down to \$42 billion, in an effort to absorb weak oil prices.

Riyadh, which pumps eight million barrels of oil a day, hopes prices will pick up again in 1996/97 as demand rises, ending its current cash crunch, experts said.

U.N. to press for confidence-building measures in Cyprus

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The U.N. secretary-general said Monday he planned to continue pressing for measures designed to build confidence between the two estranged Cypriot communities despite numerous Turkish Cypriot objections and Greek Cypriot reservations.

"I continue to believe that the package of confidence-building measures combined with the revised ideas of March 21, 1994, offers real benefits to both sides which would accrue to each in a fair and timely measure," he said in a written report to the Security Council.

During the next few weeks he and his representatives would "continue high-level contacts with the two Cypriot parties and others in pursuit of an agreement on the present

basis," Secretary-General Boutros Ghali added.

The main confidence-building measures, set out in a U.N. report last July 1, involve reopening Nicosia airport and the resort town of Varosha under U.N. control. Both have been disused since Turkish troops occupied northern Cyprus in 1974 in response to a Greek-backed coup on the island.

Dr. Ghali, in his report, gave an account of recent contacts with the leaders of the two communities by his special representative, former Canadian Foreign Minister Joe Clark, and his deputy, Gustave Feisel.

Referring to a revised paper presented to both sides on March 21, he said Turkish

Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş "voiced numerous objections, stating that the ideas contained changes from the wording of the package of July 1, 1993 in favour of the Greek Cypriot side."

Mr. Denktaş particularly emphasised his objections to proposals related to security of access between the U.N.-controlled buffer zone and Varosha arrangements concerning traffic rights at Nicosia airport the timing of benefits to the Turkish Cypriot community and the collection by the United Nations of customs duties in both areas.

Referring to Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides, the secretary-general said: "The leader of the Greek Cypriot community stated that, while he did not like many of the

changes which had been introduced in the March 21 text, he was prepared to accept that revised text if the Turkish Cypriot leader would do likewise."

Dr. Ghali said Mr. Feisel confirmed publicly, after another meeting with Mr. Denktaş March 28, that "there had been no new developments and that the Turkish Cypriot side had not provided the response necessary to make an agreement on the implementation of the confidence-building measures possible."

The secretary-general said he would report in greater detail by the end of April on the continuing contacts, "together with my recommendations to the Security Council as to further measures it may wish to consider."

JORDAN TIMES 667171

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Ordy
18:00 N.B.A. sports
19:00 News in French
19:15 Le Journal de L'Histoire
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
21:00 Prim
21:15 African Nation's Cup March
22:30 News in English
23:00 Second Half of the American Nations' Cup Match
23:00 Faldark

PRAYER TIMES

8:45 Fajr
12:38 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:38 Dhuhr
16:12 'Asr
19:01 Maghreb
20:29 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedisch, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 635441

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 717331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 717331

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717151

Assman International Church Tel. 625226

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624528

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be dusty, relatively warm and dry with clouds appearing at different altitudes and winds southeasterly active. In the afternoon temperatures will gradually drop with partly cloudy weather conditions prevailing and there will be a chance of scattered showers with winds becoming westerly

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be southerly active and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp. 14/25

Amman 14/25

Aqaba 12/27

Jordan Valley 20/33

Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 29, Aqaba 37. Humidity readings: Amman 13 per cent, Aqaba 17 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Hisham Kar'an 790286

Dr. Youssef Rashid 896301

Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 885446

Dr. Mustafa Hammallah 826024

Firdous pharmacy 661912

Al Asena pharmacy 775336

Nairookh pharmacy 637035

Al Salam pharmacy 626762

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shamsan pharmacy 637660

Nairookh pharmacy 626762

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID: Dr. Fayez Odeh 248743

Al Quds pharmacy 815615

ZARQA:

Dr. Rabea Attallah 984424

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Emergency 630441

Civil Defence Emergency 623626

Rescue Police 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 63021

Hotel Complaints 602800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality 787111

Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone 623101

Abdullah Telephone Repair 661101

Jordan Television 723111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power

HOSPITALS

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalifeh Maternity, J. Amn 644251/6

Al-Rish Maternity, J. Amn 644112

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malkas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeleul 664174

Shmeleul Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 6672270

The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664146

Indian, Al-Mithaqeen 777101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/28

Army, S.Marta 891611/5

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Zarqa Govt. Hospital 674153

ZARQA:

Zarqa National Hospital 09198323

Zarqa National Hospital 09198323

Ibn Sina Hospital 09198323

Al-Hikma Modern Hospital 09198323

IBBID:

Prince Saoud Hospital 03225



Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday tours the sites of new hotel projects around Petra (photo by George Crystal)

Queen inaugurates museum, reviews plans for Petra's future

AMMAN — As honorary chairperson and patron of the Petra National Trust, Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday visited the Petra region to inaugurate the Petra Museum.

The Queen was briefed by Minister of Tourism Mohammad Adwan who is the president of the Higher Committee for Sustainable Tourism Development to the Petra Region, and Abdolab Abu Ayyash, the assistant secretary-general at the Ministry of Tourism, on a comprehensive and integrated master plan for the sustainable development of the area. Queen Noor met with United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) representatives in Petra and discussed with them the second phase of a study, which they are currently completing.

The proposed master plan is in conformity with the draft recommendations of a UNESCO study initiated by Queen Noor in 1989. The aim of the master plan is to draft a strategy for the long-term sustainable development of Petra that achieves a balance between the increasing demands of economic and tourism concerns and the need to preserve and protect the architectural environment and the delicate ecosystem of the area while still providing for the social needs and well-being of the inhabitants of the region.

The plan addresses the need for infrastructure, including roads, parking areas, drainage and water, electricity and communications, social services in-

cluding health and education, land use, environmental impact assessment, the protection of architectural characteristics and the integration of the region from Taybeh to Beyda into one municipality to improve management and access to services.

The plan, which requires a short-term investment of JD 12 million, also addresses the services available to tourists and their impact on the area, recommends regulating the movement of tourists through the site, restricting commercial activity inside Petra, and improving services and providing income-generating activities promoting local handicrafts in the Wadi Musa Municipality.

Queen Noor said that Jordan must try to balance, as so many countries around the world have to, the competing interests of economic and tourism concerns with environmental and social needs.

She said it is essential to protect the archaeological and natural environment of Petra. The new master plan, she added, should provide a new set of guidelines to limit the number of tourists that visit Petra per day, and at the same time try to develop income-generating activities for the local people.

The Queen expressed the need to integrate all the concerns within a comprehensive plan, which would incorporate Jordan's global responsibility as custodian to the site of Petra as a world heritage as well as recognising the importance of the site to every Jordanian.

During her visit, Queen Noor also inaugurated a new museum in Petra established by the Department of Antiquities.

The museum displays small artifacts excavated in the Petra region from the Neolithic village of Beyda, the Iron Age settlement of Tawilan, the Nabatean and late Roman houses at Al Zantur, and excavations of the Temples of the Winged Lions, Qasr Al Biot and the Petra Church.

The Petra museum was built to complement an older one in Petra which displays larger architectural and sculpted stone objects.

The Queen later toured the sites of five new hotel projects and visited the village of Taybeh Zaman.

Accompanied by their Highnesses Prince Ra'ad and Princess Majda and Dr. Adwan, the Queen was received by the Governor of Ma'an, the secretary general of the Ministry of Tourism, the secretary general of the Department of Antiquities, the mayor of Wadi Musa and the chief of police.

Also Tuesday, Her Majesty attended a concert by the Japanese Kobo Quartet at the Royal Cultural Centre.

The concert is part of the activities of the first quartet festival organised by the National Music Conservatory of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation.

The concert was also attended by Her Royal Highness Princess Ghida Talal and Senator Laila Sbaraf.

Prince Firas, Sharifeh Nofah attend children's camp opening

WAOQAS — Northern Jordan Valley (Petra) — His Highness Prince Firas Beo Ra'd said here Tuesday that Jordanian statistics indicate that nearly 10 per cent of the country's population, or 300,000 inhabitants, suffer from some kind of disability and this fact should provide incentives for doubling efforts to deal with this situation.

Addressing a ceremony marking the opening of a camp by Jordanian volunteers in the Jordan Valley, the Prince said the camp and its activities are an embodiment of His Majesty King Hussein's philosophy that highlights the importance of voluntary work in the Kingdom.

Sharifeh Nofah Bint Nasser Ben Jamil, head of the Jordania Volunteers Group, opened the camp activities and outlined the volunteers' work and the group's achievements over the past two years of its existence.

The group comprises academicians and youth and operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Development, said Sharifeh Nofah. The volunteers, she added, offer services at the camps which are usually set up outside the capital at Ajloun in the summer and in Aqaba during winter.

This year the group is holding a camp in the Jordan Valley to provide training to local teachers employed at charitable societies and to carry out voluntary work such as maintenance, organising recreational trips for handicapped children and their relatives and lectures on ways to assist the handicapped, said Sharifeh Nofah.

Later she distributed gifts to 40 children from the local charitable societies caring for the handicapped.

Prince Firas attended a seminar at a local school to discuss effective measures in dealing with the disability of individuals in the country.

Princess Sarvath opens IFRCRCS meeting urging continued effort in humanitarian projects

AMMAN (J.T.) — A recent consequence to Jordan of the U.S.-led inspection of Aqaba-based ships has been the delay of the opening of the Red Crescent Hospital Extension, said Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Tuesday.

Addressing the opening of the 23rd meeting of the executive committee of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCRCS), which is being hosted in Amman, Princess Sarvath said the ship that was carrying the equipment for the new operating theatres was "arbitrarily turned back at Aqaba, delaying the project by six weeks."

"So whilst I had hoped to show you (the attendees to the meeting) the completed extension, made possible through the generosity of so many of you present today, the intricacies of power politics have made this impossible. Nevertheless, the extension will soon be open, to better serve the needs of the vulnerable in our society," said the Princess.

Princess Sarvath emphasised that Jordan has always had excellent working relations with the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and "as such we are proud to host the regional office for Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, as well as Jordan, here in Amman."

She said the Jordanian National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS), has branches all over the country, and has undertaken vital work in this troubled region, "most dramatically during the Gulf war, when it rose to the immense

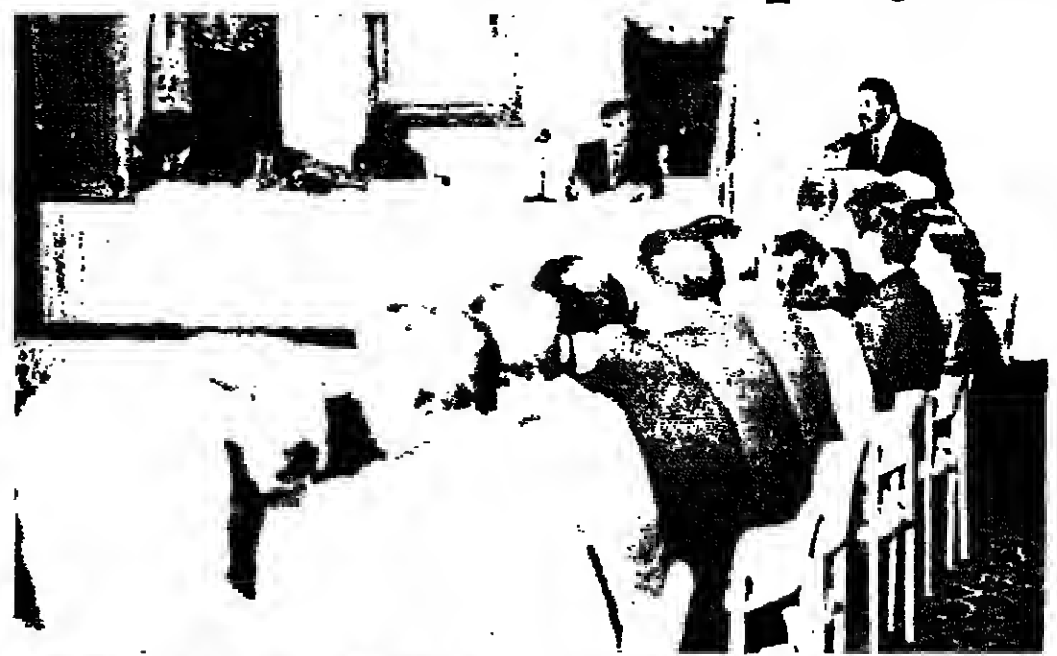
challenge of alleviating the plight of wave after wave of displaced people." She explained that on an ongoing basis, the JNRCS has organised youth camps and workshops to spread the principles of the movement, provided first-aid courses, run free hospitals and clinics, cared for orphans, offered blood-banking services, and distributed relief items among other activities.

"Unfortunately, Jordanian society is no less vulnerable than any other, to the stresses and strains of modern life, as well as to some less than desirable outside influences," Princess Sarvath said.

Therefore, she added, the JNRCS believes that it must play its role in helping to tackle these social ills, and one manifestation of this is the community programme against drug abuse that it will launch in the near future.

Princess Sarvath said that within Jordan, the JNRCS is regarded as an active partner in the Kingdom's mission not only to help victims of conflict, but to provide a stable, decent environment for all its peoples, irrespective of their origins.

"Being at the core of the world's longest running conflict has exacted a severe toll on our country to all ways. Jordan has had to deal with harsh economic and demographic realities in striving to make her dreams come true. Nevertheless, we have not been daunted in our quest for excellence in those areas where we believe there can be no compromise, and are justifiably proud of certain achievements."



President of the Jordanian National Red Crescent Society Mohammad Al Hadid Tuesday addresses the opening session of the 23rd meeting of the IFRCRCS. Also on

the podium are Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath and Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali (Petra photo)

Such achievements, she said, are not only attributable to a strong national will, but owe much to a determined effort at positive cooperation on the part of all Jordanians, peoples and government, with various U.N. agencies, and international as well as national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The Princess concluded her address by saying that with the help of organisations such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Jordan hopes to maintain its proud tradition long into the future.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam

Majali also addressed the opening meeting, emphasising Jordan's commitment to peace and His Majesty King Hussein's continuous efforts in this sphere since he assumed his constitutional powers in 1952.

Dr. Majali recalled the latest tragic events in the occupied territories, saying that they remind everyone of the dire need to lay aside arms and work for economic development.

He said that linking arms with human progress has never been part of the great Arab culture, nor has it been a target. Such a link constitutes a folly which needs to be stopped, he said.

Taking part in the meetings are officials of IFRCRCS and members of the executive committee of the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies, and presidents of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Iraq, Palestine, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria, the British and Spanish Red Cross and the secretary general of the Scandinavian cooperation council.

In the evening Princess Sarvath, who is deputy honorary president of JNRCS, hosted a dinner for the delegates to the meeting at Basman Palace.

European, Jordanian investors to explore joint mining prospects

AMMAN (Petra) — The European Union (EU) later this month will sponsor European-Jordanian meeting on joint investment, according to Mohammad Abu Taha of the Jordanian engineers association.

The meeting will be attended by Jordanians as well as European investors in mineral and natural resources and is expected to explore the prospect of launching joint schemes in mining and industry, said Mr. Abu Taha who is also head of preparatory committee for the first Jordanian conference on mining to open at the University of Jordan on April 23.

The mining conference, which will precede the European-Jordanian meeting, he said, will pave the ground for joint meeting.

Organised by the JEA, the University of Jordan and the Natural Resources Authority (NRA), the conference will be attended by 250 delegates from Jordan, Arab and foreign countries, said Mr. Abu Taha.

A total of 70 working papers will be reviewed at the three-day event, focusing mainly on oil exploration, mining economics, geological engineering, marketing of minerals and the mining industry at large, added Mr. Abu Taha.

He said a particular emphasis will be placed on Jordan's natural resources, mainly phosphate (of which Jordan produces 4.3 million tonnes) potash, copper, dolomite, granite, oil shale, and petroleum among others.

PTC wants to extend bus service

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Public Transport Corporation (PTC) soon will submit a request to the government to extend its bus service concession to areas outside Amman and will enlist the help of private transport companies to improve its services, according to Suleiman Hababbeh, the PTC director general.

He told the Jordan Times

Tuesday that when the PTC obtains the concession it would lease routes to private bus companies which would operate under its supervision.

The PTC, he said, had separate agreements with 13 companies in Amman to help solve the transportation problems within the greater Amman area, and the experiment, he added, proved to be successful.

Each of these companies has a 15-year lease with the PTC and makes an annual payment to the corporation in accordance with the agreement, explained Mr. Hababbeh.

He said that the 13 companies now operate 450 medium-size buses along various routes inside the capital and the suburbs.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL

- French film entitled "Max Et Jérémie" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 5:00 p.m.
- Italian film entitled "Fratelli E Sorelle" (Brothers and Sisters) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- Exhibition by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at the Italian Language Centre (9:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 669348)
- Exhibition of Zalloum foodstuff products at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- The Second International Stationery Exhibition at the World Exhibition Centre, University Road (Tel. 847113).
- Book exhibition at Amman University.
- Exhibition by Egyptian artist Shalabiya Ibrahim at Baladna Art Gallery (Tel. 678589).
- Exhibition of spring paintings by Dr. Ali Al Ghoni at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).
- "Spring Exhibition 1994" at the Jordan Plastic Art Association Gallery (Tel. 699914).
- Exhibition by artist Perween Al Sarraf at Abad Art Gallery (10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 819861).
- Exhibition by Iraqi artists Hayfa Habeeb and Farouk Hassan at Alia Art Gallery (10:00

a.m. - 1:30 p.m., 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.).

- Exhibition entitled "Return to Nature" at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- "The Amman-Baghdad exhibition" by Artist Ahmad Al Shalkhali at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Ceramics exhibition by artist Isam Nseirat at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Exhibition of Jordanian herbs at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Flower exhibition entitled "The Flower Bridge Between Jordan and Palestine" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Amman (10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.) (Tel. 679166)
- Art exhibition by artist Ahmed Nawar at Balke Art Gallery in Fuhels (daily from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 720902).
- Jordanian-Iraqi contemporary exhibition by over 80 artists at Ain Art Gallery in Wadi Sagra (9:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 644451).

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

- Musical performance by "Mirage" band at Prince Hassan Auditorium at the University of Jordan at 5:30 p.m.

DRAMA

- Comedy in Arabic entitled "The Guarantee" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

TALKING TRADE: The Joint Jordanian-Tunisian Economic Committee Tuesday opens a meeting in Amman to discuss promoting trade and economic relations between their countries. Assem Hindawi, director of economic cooperation at the Ministry of Industry and Trade who led the Jordanian side, said Jordan was keen on finding ways to develop trade with Tunisia and diversify the goods already in exchange. Mohammad Shawish, director of the industry department at the Tunisian ministry of economy who headed his team, said the two sides were determined to overcome obstacles impeding Jordanian-Tunisian trade. Apart from trade matters, he said, the two sides hope to discuss promoting cooperation in tourism, transport, customs affairs and agriculture. The joint committee is expected to draw up a list of national products which the two countries are to exchange during 1994, according to Mr. Hindawi. The Tunisian team, which arrived in Amman Monday night, plans to hold meetings with other Jordanian officials on Wednesday (Petra photo)

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Keeping the channels open

DESPITE THE euphoria with which the peace process was greeted when it began in Madrid in 1991, no one expected the negotiations to bring about an immediate solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nor did anyone believe the Arab parties to the talks will have identical approaches to the many complicated aspects of a conflict that continued to grow wider during the decades in which it has kept the whole region living under the shadow of war.

Differences among them were bound to develop, but common national interests and the necessity for a coordinated and unified Arab stand against an enemy which always sought to divide Arab ranks provided enough guarantees that these differences will never grow into major disagreements.

More than anybody else, the fates of the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples are inter-connected. What happens on the West Bank of the river will have its reverberations in the East Bank. So will any development in Jordan have its bearing on the Palestinians. That is why it is so crucial that Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) maintain open channels and the highest level possible of coordination. Strong Jordanian-Palestinian relations are a requirement by everyone interested in protecting the rights of the Arabs, a necessity that neither side can escape. Only Israel would want the PLO and Jordan to go their separate ways; because only Israel will benefit under such a scenario.

Jordan has, throughout the peace talks, called for a strong Arab front in the negotiations, emphasising more than anything else the uniqueness of the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship. In words as well as in deeds, it demonstrated its support for the Palestinian people and the negotiating position of the PLO. But we will be fooling ourselves to say that differences between the two sides did not emerge. It serves no purpose to deny that the relations were at some point uneasy, at other tense. But, fortunately, the disagreements have so far been contained and the problems not allowed to grow out of proportion. From that, there has been only one winner: the Arabs, one loser: the Israelis.

Hence is the importance of the visit of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to Jordan yesterday to discuss the Palestinian track of the negotiations with His Majesty King Hussein. The meeting would certainly help put things back in their right perspective and give a boost to efforts to have stronger coordination between Jordan and the Palestinians. The PLO can only benefit from hearing the Jordanian point of view on the problems facing its negotiators, and the Arab negotiating position can only get better.

Only through continuous contacts can Jordan and the PLO overcome their differences. Only by maintaining a strong front can the two sides make real progress in working to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation, regain Arab rights and advance the cause of peace in the area.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily Tuesday urged the government to refrain from taking part in the Muscat meeting of the multilateral group on water issues until the siege on Aqaba ends. It is clear that Washington is dragging its feet about ending the siege until the date of April 17 arrives when the working group on water meets, said Tariq Masarweh. All the multilateral group meetings will not achieve anything in the absence of Syria and Lebanon and they are mere seminars not different from those being held in Amman hotels, said the writer. Why should we succumb to the wishes and desires of the United States and why should we attend a U.S.-sponsored meeting when the United States maintains an unjust embargo on Aqaba harming our economy? asked the writer. The siege on Aqaba is imposed by the United States which does not apply the same practice on the Iranian and Turkish ports which are open to trade with Iraq, he added. It is clear that Washington is exercising pressure on Jordan to accept the Israeli terms for peace and serve as a buffer zone between the Jewish state and Iraq and Syria, said the writer. It is clear that Washington is linking the end of the Aqaba siege to our consent to comply to Israel's wishes, therefore, said the writer, we should never compromise on our sovereignty.

CRITICISING THE Cairo agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel on stationing civilian observers in Hebron, a columnist in Al Ra'i said that the observers can by no means ensure protection to the Palestinians. Fahd Al Fanck said that the presence of foreign observers could only have a psychological effect on the Palestinians — who will not be protected from any attacks by Jewish settlers. The writer said that Jordan had to give its blessing to the agreement out of a feeling that the fate of the Palestinians is entirely in the hand of the PLO, their sole and legitimate representative. But Jordan has made it clear that security can be achieved only with the evacuation of Jewish settlers and the dismantling of settlements. The writer said that most probably the agreement was drawn up in Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's office and therefore it is meant only to serve Israel's interests.

By G.H. Jansen

VERY CONSIDERABLE alarm and despondency has been expressed at the good showing of the Islamists, in the innocuously named Welfare Party, in the nationwide municipal election that Turkey held on March 27. As one of the party leaders put it, with a certain amount of exaggeration, "Europe is shaking in its boots."

On the face of it, the success of Welfare Party is not all that striking or shaking because, of the four major parties in the election, the party stood third, with 19 per cent of the vote. The ruling True Path Party of Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, came first with 23 per cent of the vote and the main opposition Motherland won 22 per cent. The coalition partner Social Democrat Populist Party came fourth with 12 per cent of the vote.

But there were two other aspects of Welfare's achievement that were striking, or ominous. Whereas True Path lost a few percentage points, Welfare doubled its strength from the nine per cent it got in the last election in 1989. Further, on the municipal level Welfare's successes were spectacular: Its candidates won the posts of mayor in Turkey's two main cities, Istanbul and the national capital Ankara, and took over the municipalities in 26 other towns, compared with 12 for True Path. What probably had the most shaking impact on Europe is that Turkey claims to be a European country; a small part of its territory is, after all, known as "Turkey-in-Europe," and Islamic fundamentalism seems to have defeated the prolonged, concerted and so far successful efforts by the Christian Western powers to keep Islam out of southeast Europe, which they did by frustrating the establishment of a Muslim state in Bosnia. Since Turkey has gotten the U.N. to accept 1,000 Turkish soldiers in the U.N. force in Bosnia, Islam may now leapfrog the barrier of the Straits of Bosphorus and bypass the Orthodox Christian countries of Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia. Furthermore, the country in which Islam has now proved its popular strength is one that for 50 years has proclaimed itself to be secular, or laic, as asserted by the founder of modern Turkey Kemal Ataturk, who in fact was not really laic but non-religious and even anti-Islamic. Of course Ataturk's anti-Islamic reforms had little



Is 'Europe shaking in its boots'?

A strong show by Turkey's Islamists rings the alarm

or no impact on Islamic devotion in Turkey, particularly at the popular level. Islam simply went underground and observance flowed through the tarikats, the semi-clandestine "brotherhoods." Western Europe would probably be much less shaken if, on reflection, it realised that the forward surge of militant fundamentalist Islam has not been produced by spiritual forces but, on the contrary, by material challenges, the challenges of poverty, ignorance, disease and, most particularly, the challenge of mass unemployment of the educated or semi-educated middle class. The electoral success of the Welfare Party had more to do with economic realities than with Sharia.

certain other preconditions are found.

The country, obviously, has to be Islamic, with a devout Muslim majority. And almost all large Muslim groupings are devout, which they certainly are in Turkey, despite the superficial success of the shallow reforms of the so-called Kemalist "revolution."

Militant Islam obviously needs leaders or groups with an Islamic ideology to show the way. Which is why it played a leading role in all the nationalist movements in Afro-Asian countries: in Indonesia, Iran, the various Arab countries and, conspi-

ciously, in what would be the last of these nationalist struggles, in Afghanistan.

Yet, if nationalism is no longer the carrier-wave of militant Islam, there are contemporary happenings that are helping to carry it forward, in countries like Egypt and Algeria where Islam's ultimate victory seems assured. There is the continuing pressure and challenge from omnipresent Western-style modernism that is inescapable through programmes on radio and television and in the cinema.

There is the cruder challenge that Muslims are being persecuted for being Muslims in such widely separated parts of the world as Bosnia, Myanmar or Burma, Kashmir and Palestine. The Muslim countries tried and failed to make a specifically Islamic response in Bosnia through speeches at, and resolutions of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, in which Turkey played a prominent role. However, the resolutions and speeches did at least serve to keep alive the idea of resistance to the anti-Muslim campaign in Bosnia.

Negatively, the collapse of Communism has removed one alternative response to Western hegemony, leaving Islam to stand or fall on its own.

Just as the ideology of militant Islam has material causes, it likewise has material and ideological antidotes. Democracy can be an effective antidote through free and fair elections. So, too, is economic development provided it is effectively planned and executed. These are not impossible alternatives to militant Islam, these alternatives have never really been tried except, perhaps, in Jordan.

The writer is a Cyprus-based journalist specialising in Middle Eastern and Islamic affairs.

'Tamilgate' reveals dark side to Danish politics

By Lars Foyen
Reuters

COPENHAGEN — Denmark's "Tamilgate" drama, which brought down Prime Minister Poul Schluter, has entered its final act, the impeachment of former justice minister, Erik Ninn-Hansen. Mr. Ninn-Hansen, 71, grand old man of the Conservative Party and Mr. Schluter's mentor, is accused of breaking the law by ordering a halt to family reunifications for Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka in 1987.

Prosecutors describe the proceedings, the first in Denmark in 84 years, as an ordinary criminal trial. The defence says it is the last round in a political power game. Mr. Ninn-Hansen denies breaking the law, saying he was carrying out the implied wishes of his own minority centre-right cabinet and the opposition Social Democrats.

More than 100 colleagues have accused me of breaking the law, Mr. Ninn-Hansen, a prominent member of parliament for 41 years, said in a bitter attack on the legislature which last year voted to impeach him.

"But I still do not understand what I am being accused of."

A final ruling is expected in the second half of the year and he could face a fine or up to two years in jail.

The crux of the case is about the supreme power of parliament and adherence to Lutheran values such as following the rules and always telling the truth.

"Try to look away from refugees and immigration policies. This case is not about Tamils. It is about the law applying to all citizens, even to justice ministers," prosecutor John Petersen said as proceedings started.

Mr. Ninn-Hansen says that because he was anticipating tighter legislation on immigration he had asked officials in his ministry to put Tamil cases on "hold" within the boundaries of what he described as woolly immigration laws.

The prosecutors maintain the law gives refugees an unambiguous right to have their families join them. An influx of Tamils fleeing the civil war in Sri Lanka in 1987 coincided with widespread sentiment in Denmark that immigration in general and family reunifications in particular had to be curtailed.

A parliamentary majority in favour of tougher immigration laws never materialised, and the halt of Tamil reunifications was revealed by the parliamentary ombudsman in 1989. Mr. Ninn-Hansen, H.P. Clausen who succeeded him as justice minister and, finally, Mr. Schluter himself were accused of misleading parliament in attempts to cover up the scandal.

There was a feeling among the opposition that Schluter-led minority governments, in power since 1982, were developing a habit of arrogantly bypassing parliament.

Economy and Tax Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen resigned in November 1992 after opposition parties threatened a no confidence vote against him for switching budgetary funds for technical reasons without properly informing members of parliament.

The Tamil affair came to a head in January 1993 when Supreme Court Justice Mogens Hornslet released the 6,000-page result of a 30-month judicial inquiry, accusing Mr. Schluter of lying to parliament about it.

Mr. Schluter resigned and three small pivotal centrist parties that had been part of his parliamentary platform switched their support to Social Democrat Poul Nyrup Rasmussen who formed a four-party government. Last June, parliament voted by 105-45 to impeach Mr. Ninn-Hansen. Those in favour included members of his own party.

Mr. Schluter and Mr. Clausen, who were reprimanded by parliament, will not be impeached. Mr. Ninn-Hansen's defence lawyers say his impeachment, before a panel of 12 supreme court judges and 12 lay judges appointed by parliament, is a political vendetta and a way of providing a scapegoat in a case which embarrasses all politicians.

Mr. Ninn-Hansen caused a stir last month when he announced that he was shortly undergoing an operation for an unspecified medical condition. His treatment will force a one-month recess in the proceedings between Easter and May 2.

"Tamilgate" has led to a new atmosphere of confrontation in a country traditionally ruled by minority governments but where consensus-seeking politicians used to get things done in spite of ideological differences.

The new government, trailing badly in opinion polls before a general election due by December, has not achieved its stated ambition of improving government ethics. Justice Minister Pia Gjellerup and Social Affairs Minister Bente Juncker have been forced to resign and Tax Minister Ole Stavd has been under pressure to do so.

The scandals have involved ministerial negligence, arrogance or lies. But no financial gains for the ministers.

The Danish media report each case in detail but the public appears far from enthralled.

Despite 21 months of parliamentary "Tamilgate" debates followed by the judicial inquiry, many Danes still do not understand what all the fuss is about.

Turn on the red light for North Korea

By Charles Krauthammer

WASHINGTON — Sometimes even appeasement doesn't work. When North Korea ostentatiously reneged on its promise to allow a nine-month inspection of some of its nuclear facilities, the Clinton administration had to concede that its policy of serial concessions had reached a dead end.

After a year of meeting every broken North Korean nuclear promise with infinite patience and yet another proffered carrot, even Secretary of State Warren Christopher appears to have reached his limit. He warned North Korea that if it does not "become a responsible member of the international community" — fat chance — Washington "will have no choice but to pursue other options," and "these other options include progressively stronger measures." Coming from Mr. Christopher, they're fightin' words.

It is important to realise how much ground the administration had given up before reaching this impasse. It gave in on inspecting nuclear sites that North Korea deemed off-limits. It deferred the demand for continuing inspections, accepting a one-shot inspection of seven declared sites.

But when the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was barred from one of even these sites after it discovered a broken seal indicating the possible diversion of plutonium for more bombs, the gig was up. The IAEA blew the whistle and, in effect, declared North Korea a nuclear renegade (in "noncompliance," in IAEA-speak).

Now the U.N. Security Council, led by the United States, is supposed to do something. What has the administration been doing up to now? The only person who has been able to make sense of its Korea policy has been, Jim Hoagland. The policy, he explained boils down to this: the administration is willing to concede as "so much spit milk" whatever bombs and plutonium the North Koreans already have, but it is drawing a line in the sand, a new, more realistic line — it will not tolerate new bombs or rockets.

Well, now we get to see whether the administration has the spine to hold any line. By summer, write Gary Milhollin and Diana Edensword of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, the North Koreans will be able to divert enough new plutonium for two more bombs. And when their new 800-megawatt reactor comes on line in two years,

they will be producing enough plutonium for 30 to 40 bombs per year.

This is the ultimate nightmare. Unlike other nuclear wannabes, North Korea wants the stuff not just for show or use but for sale. As CIA Director James Woolsey points out, North Korea is "in a league by itself," the preeminent world proliferator.

Which is why the Clinton administration is finally acting, albeit painfully slowly. The United Nations will not be asked to impose economic sanctions now, but only if North Korea does not repent by a later date. Patriot missiles are being sent to South Korea not by air but by sea. There is a kind of desperation in this delay, a hope against hope that if one acts slowly enough maybe something will turn up.

The administration is acting now because not to act would expose its containment policy as a farce. For a year, administration doves have been praying that Kim Il Sung would let them off the hook. He declined. Now the doves have come around to where the hawks were a year ago: preparing to pressure Mr. Kim with sanctions in the face of North Korean threats to go to war.

It is a fearful prospect that even administration doves realise can no longer be wished away. Mr. Clinton has been president for a year. On North Korea, it has been a year of dithering, of further North Korean bomb development, of American weakness and uncertainty.

America's two critical allies in such a coalition are Japan and China. The administration has succeeded in alienating both: Japan, with heavy-handed threats of a trade war; and, more seriously, China, with Mr. Christopher's disastrous trip to Beijing. Moreover, the president has done nothing to prepare the American people for the danger that lies ahead.

The president urgently needs to explain America's goals, its reasons for trying to stop North Korea from going nuclear, and the nature and magnitude of the threat. He sets out his policy with firmness and honesty, he can be assured of bipartisan political support and the beginning of public understanding. He will need both if he is to avoid making a mockery of his commitment to non-proliferation and his own policy of containment.

Washington Post Writers Group

King, Arafat review peace talks

(Continued from page 1)

strained in Egypt, Yemen, Iraq and elsewhere in the Arab World.

Mr. Arafat, who was received upon arrival by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and other senior officials, praised King Hussein's stands in support of the Palestinian cause.

The PLO chairman described as another positive achievement the Israeli agreement to allow the return of nearly 45 Palestinians expelled from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Around the time Mr. Arafat arrived, a group of 26 Palestinian expellees and their families crossed the King Hussein Bridge to the West Bank as part of accelerated moves towards Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and Jericho as envisaged in the September deal signed in Washington. Another group of 17 entered the Gaza Strip from Egypt.

Mr. Arafat expressed hope that Israel would allow more of the 2,000 plus Palestinians that the Jewish state expelled after occupying the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the 1967 war.

Mr. Arafat expressed hope that progress would be made soon in the ongoing Israeli-PLO negotiations in Cairo and said a round of talks on economic cooperation was scheduled to begin in Paris on Wednesday.

The PLO chairman said the Cairo talks were focused on a "mechanism" to implement U.N. Security Council Resolu-

tion 904 of March 18 which condemned the Feb. 25 massacre of dozens of Palestinians by one or more Jewish settlers at Hebron's Ibrahim Mosque.

The resolution heightened international awareness of the Palestinian people's plight under occupation he said.

Reports from Cairo indicated that the negotiations had run into snags in the face of what PLO officials described as Israel's stalling over key issues such as the deployment of the police force.

Asked when he planned to visit Palestinian territories expected to come under self-rule, Mr. Arafat said "soon." He did not give a date.

Reports from Tunis have said that the PLO leader was planning a visit in May.

Also expected to be discussed between the King and Mr. Arafat was the status of Jerusalem following Jordanian criticism that the Arab group at the United Nations, including the PLO, had mishandled the language of the resolution and opened the door for the U.S. to set a precedent by abstaining on parts of the resolution referring to Jerusalem.

After Arafat envoy Hakan Balawi briefed him last week, Prime Minister Majali said the PLO had intended well by insisting on including a reference to Jerusalem in the resolution.

Mr. Arafat was received at the airport by Dr. Majali, Minister of State for the Prime Ministry Affairs and Minister of Information Jawad Al Anani.

Expellees return to homeland

(Continued from page 1)

told the Jordan Times that it would be her first visit to Palestine. Born in Damascus, Ms. Deek said she would settle in her husband's hometown just outside Nablus. "This is what my father and many others died for — our return," she told the Jordan Times.

Intissar Wazir, a member of the Palestine Central Council, was at the PLO mission to see off her daughter and son-in-law.

Faisal Hnsseini, leading Fateh official in the occupied territories, kissed and hugged well-wishers before boarding one of the two buses reserved for returnees to accompany

them into the occupied territories.

"This is a small first step leading to the return of over a thousand other deportees," Mr. Hussein told reporters.

Ahmad Deek had been a member of the unified command for the uprising when he was deported in 1988. Men such as Mr. Deek and Marwan Barghouti, 35, a student union activist from the University of Bir Zeit are expected to fill leadership roles on the intermediary level before the Tunis-based PLO leadership enters the occupied territories.

Also on Tuesday, another 17 deportees entered to the occupied Gaza Strip from Egypt through the Rafah crossing.

Tackling bureaucracy a priority

(Continued from page 1)

ground were different "many citizens would stay in their areas and invest in projects there because they would know that decisions can be taken quickly in their own district and without referring to Amman."

The premier said that Interior Minister Salameh Hamad's statement Monday that special committees were drawing up a draft law on elections and another on new administrative divisions concerning different districts was borne out of this idea, but that the government was still at the early stage of thinking about them.

Just as this vision includes setting up a chain of government decision-making offices in the different districts, the premier believes a parallel mechanism could be found for the legislative authority.

"The whole system of government has to be close to the citizen," the premier said. "I personally think that the first link in this chain should be the administrative district (liwa) where a district governor would have a cabinet-like body to run the day-to-day affairs of that area. The governorate would be the second chain where also a governor would be aided by a cabinet-like committee," he added. "This would leave the central government in Amman the role of planning, drawing up strategy and policy making."

The legislative authority would also have a similar chain of bodies which are elected at the district, governorate and then the national level, the prime minister said.

Dr. Majali explained that the purpose of this process was to alleviate the pressure on the capital and to improve the Bureaucracy. "We want to reduce the pressure on Amman."

He said that one could see the problem rising from having a centralised government by looking at the traffic in the capital. "If we achieve this we would be saving hundreds of millions of dinars as well as precious lives."

His government, Dr. Majali said, has also plans to alleviate unemployment without further taxing the public sector with unnecessary employees. He believes that "industry and free-market investment is the

answer to unemployment."

The government, he said, has found that public sector funds can and should be used to do this.

"The Social Security Corporation and the Jordan Investment Bureau currently invest in shares or in money-making projects," the premier said. "We think that their funds could be better used in building government office buildings and housing for employees. The government would then rent the offices from these corporations instead of the buildings they currently occupy ... that would ensure a return on their investment and would generate more money for investments in labour-intensive projects," he added.

The premier also said he believed that progress in the Middle East peace process and improvement in Arab-Arab relations will also contribute positively to solving the unemployment problem in the Kingdom.

In the 90-minute meeting, Dr. Majali responded to reports by the press that his government was targeting professional associations describing them as "unconstitutional."

The premier said that these reports were fabricated and that his government had a lot of respect for the role of professional associations but that he also believed that they cannot continue to exercise the political role they had before political pluralism was sanctioned in the Kingdom.

The role of a professional association, he said, was to "protect me from people attacking me because of my profession, or to protect the people from me because of misuse of my profession."

"Associations entered politics in the past because there were no political parties," he said, adding that the law governing associations already guarantees against a political role for the associations "and we want to see them adhere to the law."

"Professional associations are in a similar situation to that of mosques," Dr. Majali said. "Before the Islamic Action Front was sanctioned, mosques were being used for political purposes ... We stopped the misuse of mosques and the same should apply to professional associations ... otherwise it would not be fair."

By Kathy Wilhelm
The Associated Press

SHENZHEN, China — He's studied English at night and likes to call himself Jesse.

The only son in a family of five children, Jesse left the farm at age 20 in search of a job. Six years later, he has little to show for it: everything he owns is with him on a narrow metal bunk bed at a television factory in Shenzhen, the booming Chinese development zone next to Hong Kong.

There is his one suit, shiny and gray-green, hanging loosely on his skinny frame. There are a radio and some books, a few dishes, a box of papers.

What's that brochure? It turns out Jesse spends his free time in direct sales for an American health-food company making a big push in southern China. That has given him ideas for getting out of the factory, he said, maybe even starting a business of his own.

Jesse hasn't made much money, but going back to the village is the farthest thing from his mind.

"People look down on you if you farm," he said. "Why did you Americans go west? Because there were more opportunities. It's just like that in Shenzhen. To go from a farm to a city factory, to go from peasant to worker, aren't the opportunities wider?"

There are at least 80 million Jesses across China, peasants who have left their villages in search of opportunity. Jesse, who has a high school education, has better prospects than most, but all share his ambition to create a life free from the tyranny of flood, drought and government grain quotas.

Since average rural incomes are less than one-third those of city dwellers, the migrants believe they have nothing to lose.

Their cheap labour has become a major factor in keeping China's economic growth at 13 per cent annually for the last two years. They turn out the shirts, sneakers and toys so familiar on U.S. and European store shelves. They build the office towers, hotels and highways that are transforming Beijing, Shanghai and Canton.

More are always on the way, hitchhiking along highways or squeezing into rail cars. Ask why and the answer is uniform: There are no jobs at home. No one wants to farm.

For the first three decades of Communist rule, the people stayed mainly where they were born, bound by a strict population registration sys-



IN PURSUIT OF A BETTER LIFE: New arrivals from provinces of China wait outside Beijing's central train station (AFP photo)

In South China, nothing keeps them down to the farm

tem and travel controls.

The controls relaxed enough in the 1980s to let peasants travel to cities for winter jobs, when the land was fallow. Then, in the 1990s, the "peasant army" became a year-round occupation force.

Now most urban construction workers, garbage collectors, street sweepers, maids, bicycle repairmen, shoeshiners and popcorn vendors are former peasants. So are most of the factory workers in such coastal boomtowns as Shenzhen.

"They do the jobs that are dirty, tiring and dangerous," said Han Jun, a researcher at the Rural Development Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

"City people don't just consider the income, they also consider whether a job has status," he said. "A city woman doesn't want to wash dishes" for a living.

Most migrants live as cheaply as possible in the cities and send money home that spurs development in the villages.

In Liojiaguanfang village in Shandong Province, eastern China, a survey found the average income was equivalent to \$50 a year for families without migrant members and \$147 for those with some-

one in the city.

Communities of migrants have grown up on the outskirts of major cities. Beijing's "Zhejiang Village" is home to more than 700,000 migrants from Zhejiang Province just south of Shanghai, including many entire families.

The Chen family is typical. Chen Chuanhao, 32, his wife, infant son and two friends share a small rented room. With two sewing machines, they churn out leather bomber jackets and whatever else is in fashion.

"We can make to order, we're fast, our prices are low," said Mr. Chen, who wears a beeper on his belt. The family's annual income, he said evasively, is "several tens of thousands of Yuan," thousands of U.S. dollars, or several times that of most permanent residents of Beijing.

Unlike permanent city residents, the migrants have no watchful neighbourhood committees to supervise their activities, their guests, their births.

"We are the Ziyou Pai" the free faction — Mr. Chen said. "We can come and go as we please."

That makes city officials and residents nervous. Cities blame rising crime rates on

the migrants. Shanghai says they committed half the crimes reported there last year.

Authorities also say many migrants are having second and third babies, violating the government's one-child-per-couple plan for controlling the population, now at 1.2 billion.

There are other social problems, many related to the migrants' exclusion from urban social services. Without a city hukou, or residency permit, a peasant migrant cannot send his children to school, get a telephone, obtain a marriage license or, in many cases, medical treatment.

The psychological pressures on migrants are many. "Life on the farm is more secure than life here as a worker," said Zheng, 25, who left his village five months ago to work at a television factory in Shenzhen. "Today I may have work and tomorrow I may be out of a job, have no food and nowhere to sleep."

The Yangcheng Evening News of Canton, a city with several million migrant workers, noted that many are women in their late teens or early 20s who are away from home for the first time. At home they probably would

have married, but many factory bosses forbid marriage. The result: rising numbers of single women giving birth and having abortions.

Peasants who move to cities "are in an alien cultural sea," said Greg O'Leary, senior lecturer at the Centre for Labour Studies of the University of Adelaide, Australia.

"It's like the experience of people in the industrial revolution: People brought out of a work environment determined by the weather," he said. "It's an immense personal, psychological, sociological jolt. Crime is a natural response of people in those circumstances."

The natural response of Chinese authorities bent on maintaining order is to send the migrants home. Canton and Shenzhen, the most popular targets of the "peasant army," have intensified efforts to round up new arrivals. They've dismantled some migrant tent cities and cleared campers out of the train stations.

But even after a month of extra police patrols, Shenzhen authorities acknowledged they had only caught perhaps one of six unauthorised migrants and could not prevent more from coming. Economists and sociolog-

ists say the government should stop trying to control the flow and instead reform the residency permit system instead so peasants can obtain city hukous.

"If China excludes 80 per cent of its population from the urbanisation process, it can't really enter the ranks of developed countries," said Mr. Han of the Social Sciences Academy.

He argues that residency controls interfere with the flow of labour where it is needed.

While authorities debate reforming the hukou system, many cities are quietly doing so, spurred by the same profit motive that gave rise to the peasant invasion.

Beijing's Fengtai District, where "Zhejiang Village" is located, sells temporary permits to most of its migrants, reaping hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. Pinggu County on Beijing's outskirts offers permanent residencies to people who invest 100,000 yuan (\$11,500).

That's good news for the Jesses, with their boundless energy and ambition.

The young man fingered his health-food brochures and said hopefully: "I heard that 20 per cent of American millionaires got their start in direct sales."

Bosnian war's 1st victim remembered

By Samir Koric
Reuters

SARAJEVO — The first shots in the Bosnian war killed my good friend Suada Dilberovic.

We were part of a crowd of about 20,000 people gathered in front of the parliament building on the morning of April 5, 1992 to protest against Serb barricades that had sprung up across Sarajevo.

Many people will tell you now that they saw the war coming then. But I didn't and I don't think Suada did either.

We were there because we thought there was still time to change people's minds, to save Sarajevo and Bosnia as a place where Muslims, Serbs and Croats could live together as they had for 500 years.

For lovely city of Dubrovnik on Croatia's Adriatic Coast, the issue was more than abstract.

Her parents had been trapped in Dubrovnik since October of 1991 when Serbs laid siege to the city during their war with Croatia. Refugees in their own town, they had been driven from their home by relentless Serb shelling and were living in an hotel.

As a medical student scheduled to graduate in May, Suada could easily have stayed away from the demonstration that day. She wasn't from Sarajevo. She wasn't even Bosnian.

But my friend was outraged by the division of a city she had come to know and love over five years of schooling, and her family was already paying a price for the kind of ethnic hatred that lay behind the barricades.

It was not an angry crowd. I remember Suada standing there that morning with her blonde hair and sparkling blue eyes, laughing. The people around us, more of them young, were good-humoured and eager to make their point in a peaceful way.

Late in the morning several thousand of us decided to make our way to one of the

barricades on the other side of the Vrbanja bridge, behind the parliament tower.

The idea was to cross the bridge to Grhavica, to show that the city still belonged to the people — all the people. As the crowd began to move I lost track of Suada.

I was about 50 metres from the bridge when a few shots, maybe five or six, rang out. Everybody began to run.

Once we got to cover behind a building I was incredibly angry. It had never occurred to me that someone would open fire on a group of unarmed demonstrators.

In a city where 65,000 people, most of them civilians, have since been killed or wounded by sniping and shelling I know that sounds naive.

"(Suada) never had to queue for water or scrounge for firewood or scan daily war obituaries in the dreadful knowledge that among the dead would probably be an acquaintance ... The war ended for her at the very moment it began for us."

I went with friends to a cafe where someone said a woman had been wounded in the leg, but not seriously. I thought no more about it, nor about Suada.

When I got home in the early afternoon I could tell something was wrong with my mother. As I found out later, she had heard on the radio that Suada had been killed, but couldn't bring herself to tell me.

She kept suggesting that I telephone Suada's apartment. When I did, one of her cousins answered, crying.

I knew immediately what had happened. Suada had been in the front line of the demonstration, right where I should have expected her to be. Not because she was a political person, she wasn't. But because she was principled and her sense of right and wrong had been offended by the barricades.

The bullet hit her in the

chest. She was dead on arrival at Kosevo Hospital, the first of many friends and relatives with war wounds hauled into that trauma clinic, which I have come to know as well as my own home.

Suada was buried on April 7 in a part of Sarajevo's hallowed cemetery reserved for famous people. Her parents, still trapped in Dubrovnik, couldn't come. About 500 mostly young people, fellow students and friends, attended the service.

The Serbs had shelled the old town for the first time the night before. We were all nervous because we were so close to their positions, but nobody said anything. We were trying to be as brave as

Colonial residue: blacks tire of white 'experts'

By Mark Fritz
The Associated Press

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast — Civil engineer Gerard Paillat has seen the future of this West African nation, and it has less room for well-paid white men like himself.

A decade ago, Mr. Paillat said, few people minded when he joined an army of French people working in the Bureau of Large Projects, which builds roads, buildings and dams in the Ivory Coast.

No longer. The cost of the outsiders and resentment by increasingly better-trained citizens have compelled some African bureaucracies to reduce the numbers of Western workers.

"The resentment exists," said Mr. Paillat, 47. "Expatriates are expensive. You can find Ivorians who are not as expensive who are able to do the work."

He said the expatriates in his office average salaries of 1.5 million to 2 million African francs (\$2,500 to \$3,400) a month while Ivorians are paid 400,000 (\$670).

Ivory Coast, a former French colony, was pressured by its own people to embark on "Ivorisation" a decade ago.

Since then, the number of French workers has dropped from 3,900 to 670, said Patrick Roussel, head of mission for France's Ministry of Cooperation and Cultural Affairs.

"The policy of Ivorisation is completely natural and understandable," he said. "France has welcomed and encouraged such a policy."

Despite the decline in one of the last vestiges of colonialism, considerable resentment remains in many countries over the presence of foreigners not only in civil service, but in business and management of development aid.

In Ivory Coast, many ministers still retain a "counselor," or adviser, a shadow bureaucrat paid by the

French government to whisper the Western way of doing things into the ears of the upper echelon.

Cyrille Ahiaidife, a science professor and chemical engineer in Togo, said the outsiders earn salaries "way out of proportion to their qualifications."

"In the teaching field, France sends (expatriates) without experience who come to Africa and receive salaries five times higher than their African counterparts, who have the same professional training," he said.

Togo has about 3,000 French civil servants, but the ranks are thinning quickly because of "an anti-French sentiment in some circles," a French diplomat said, on condition of anonymity.

Senegal had 870 French people on the payroll in 1990, but the foreign ministry said the number has fallen to less than 600.

Some African officials say they must hire Westerners because they lack experts in many fields. They also feel a need to bring talent from more successful economies to the most impoverished continent in the world.

"We have to interchange," said Ousmane Diop Blonden, manager of a "furniture company with Ivorian government contracts."

But many Africans are rankled by the remaining influences, particularly in France's former African empire, where the French retain substantial economic interests.

The showcase regional consortium in West Africa, the multinational airline Air Afrique, hired a white airline executive from France five years ago to turn it around. His contract was renewed in January despite a \$13.6 million loss and an attempt to replace him with a former prime minister of Niger, Congo, unable to control a

guerrilla movement, signed a \$50 million contract with an Israeli firm this year to retrain elite military units. It asked the French army to retrain the regular army and national police force.

In March, France sent paratroopers in a show of support to Cameroon, a former colony embroiled in a border dispute with Nigeria, which has strongly criticised the French presence in its smaller neighbour.

Nicéphore Soglo, president of Benin, employs a Frenchman as his personal secretary.

Ghana, the first African nation to gain independence, was among the first to replace white civil servants. It did so by investing in education and sending hundreds of students to study abroad.

But Western lending institutions, fearful of the corruption endemic in Africa, often require their own managers as conditions of loans and development grants.

Because of this, Ghana, a former British colony that began an ambitious restructuring programme in 1983, found itself awash in consultants overseeing the aid money. The expatriates are paid in dollars.

Lawmaker Kosi Kedem told parliament in March that 25 per cent of the development money Ghana receives goes for the salaries of expatriates involved.

"Some of them just come to siphon loans given to the country," said Grumheld Kofi Deke, an engineering consultant.

Such resentment is understandable to Mr. Paillat, who said the number of French workers in his department had fallen from 160 to 60 since he joined it in 1985 and is expected to reach 20 by year's end.



A trader on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange gives a thumbs-down as he watches the Dow drop more than 60 points in the opening minutes of Monday trading (AFP photo)

White House frets over market crash

WASHINGTON (R) — The collapse in stock and bond markets has set off alarm bells at the White House, but so far the administration has avoided the temptation of criticising the Federal Reserve (Fed) for the debacle.

Administration officials, from President Bill Clinton on down, have instead pinned the blame for the price rout on the markets themselves and have launched an all-out, and thus far unsuccessful, effort to convince skittish investors that they are overreacting.

"I think there was an over-reaction in the markets when the Federal Reserve raised the short-term interest rates a little bit," Mr. Clinton said in Cleveland Monday. "I don't think there's any reason to be worried about the long-term health of the economy."

With old Wall Street hand Robert Rubin in charge of coordinating economic policy, the administration is well aware that public criticism of the independent central bank could end up backfiring.

While Fed-bashing might succeed in convincing the central bank to hold down short-term rates, it could drive the economically more important long-term rates higher on heightened fears of inflation.

Since the Fed raised short-term interest rates for the first time in five years on Feb. 4, bond prices have plunged by more than 12 points, pushing the yield on the key 30-year issue to over 7.4 per cent, its highest level since Mr. Clinton took office in January last year.

The collapse in bond prices has dragged the stock market down in its wake, sending the blue chip Dow Jones industrial average skidding by 10 per cent in the last two months.

Although the stock market dive has grabbed most of the headlines, the administration seems more concerned about the steep rise in long-term interest rates.

"I think a lot of people have thought for some time that the stock market is somewhat overvalued," Mr. Clinton said.

The administration is worried about the crash because it's been counting on low long-term interest rates to power the economy while it cuts the federal government budget deficit.

"I think they're (interest rates) too high," Mr. Clinton said. "I think they'll come back down."

The current truce between the administration and Fed over interest rates doesn't mean that the two don't have their differences.

Administration officials have privately been surprised by how quickly the Fed has raised short-term rates this year — by a total of a half percentage point. They also seem more willing than their Fed counterparts to accept a small rise in inflation in 1995 and 1996.

No one is quite sure what's pushing long-term rates higher, even the Fed, part of it though seems to stem from signs that the U.S. economy is growing faster than had been widely expected, pushing up demand for credit and fanning fears that inflation is on the horizon.

The administration has officially forecast growth this year of three per cent, but some officials, including Mr. Rubin, believe that the economy may expand by more than that, perhaps by 3 1/4 per cent.

But it's the outlook for next year, and for 1996, that has the administration worried. If long-term rates stay high, administration officials fear that growth could be undercut just as Mr. Clinton is gearing up for another run at the presidency.

If that looks like it might happen, then the administration might come out swinging against the Fed as it fights for its political life.

Russian finance ministry threatens to halt spending

MOSCOW (R) — The Russian finance ministry threatened Tuesday to stop all government financing, including President Boris Yeltsin's salary, after parliament refused to approve a temporary spending mechanism.

The Federation Council, the upper chamber, failed to approve a law passed by the lower house 10 days ago on state spending in the second quarter of 1994.

The law, proposed by the government, would allow the functions of state to continue until a proper budget is approved. The council voted in favour by 82-49, seven votes short of the 89 needed to approve the law.

The upper chamber is made up of regional representatives who apparently objected to the law's restrictions on subsidies to the regions. Deputies voted to set up a conciliation commission with the lower house, the Duma, to resolve the matter.

But Sergei Alexashenko, a deputy finance minister, announced that all financing through the central bank would cease immediately.

"From this minute, the finance ministry is halting all work on the budget," he told the chamber. "Tomorrow we will send letters to the central bank asking it to stop all operations, including salaries for the president and the state apparatus."

This would apparently include financing for parliament.

Federation Council speaker Vladimir Shumeiko urged deputies to pass the law saying its rejection would threaten the normal functioning of the chamber, which had already run up four billion roubles (\$2.3 million) in debts.

Meanwhile, Russia's central bank has started raids on the country's mushrooming foreign exchange offices to force them to comply with regulations.

Viktor Melnikov, head of the central bank's currency control and regulation department, told Reuters the clean-up was launched because up to a third of exchange offices in Russia could be operating without official permission.

Walking into such offices, clients felt more like they were facing a gang of thugs than a proper exchange business, he said.

"Starting from April 1, we have started launching regular raids on exchange offices with the help of law-enforcement bodies," Mr. Melnikov said.

"We, as the central bank, want to upgrade the level of services delivered by exchange offices, needless to say, if you want to change some dollars in Moscow, it's a risky affair and you are never safe when left alone with those 'new businessmen' who look more like criminals," he added.

"This is how you tell the immediate differences between London and the Russian capital," he pointed out.

The central bank has already checked the accounts of about 900 exchange offices in Moscow opened by some 101 commercial banks, Mr. Melnikov said. Of these, 165 offices did not correspond to "civilised standards." Criminal investigations were launched against 14 of them, he added.

"First, we are going to put our Moscow in order, then we will use our experience in all regions of Russia to bring the system of exchange offices into line with Western standards," he explained.

Turkey's premier unveils crucial austerity package

ANKARA (R) — Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller unveiled a crucial economic package to rescue the troubled-economy including one-off taxes, the closure of loss-making state firms and thousands of job losses.

"We will not stop the economy. An export-based growth will continue," Ms. Ciller told a news conference.

The programme was designed to lower inflation, stabilise the battered Turkish lira, boost exports and narrow huge public deficits, Ms. Ciller said.

"If we don't take these measures, inflation will surge over 100 per cent and we will be

heading towards a Latin American experience with 2,000 per cent inflation," Ms. Ciller said.

Turkey will set up fiscal and monetary targets for three-monthly periods. Ms. Ciller said the quarterly budget deficit would be reduced to nine trillion lira (\$295 million) from an earlier target figure of 47.6 trillion (\$1.5 billion).

The government raised prices of many state monopoly goods including petrol, tobacco, alcohol, sugar and fertiliser by up to 100 per cent to raise public funds.

Ms. Ciller said an expected decline in domestic demand for such goods as a result of the measures would deter produc-

ers from raising prices further. She said the central bank would be freed gradually from the burden of financing the budget deficit.

The government will close down some unprofitable state enterprises including coal mines and an iron and steel factory. It will also speed up privatisation, which is expected to raise \$3.5 billion in revenue this year.

A low-rate, one-off tax would be charged on net assets of all income and corporate tax payers, on luxury cars and individuals who own more than one property.

Ms. Ciller said the measures would help Turkey achieve its



Tansu Ciller

aim for a customs union with the European Union next year. "An improvement in the Turkish economy will be seen in the second half of 1994. Inflation will drop sharply and economic balance will be re-established," she said.

Financial market volatility seen aiding U.S. oil prices

NEW YORK (R) — U.S. oil prices, the ugly duckling of commodities the last 12 months, may benefit from renewed attention from influential managed funds that scored poor results in stocks and other tools in the first quarter.

That was the explanation behind crude's rally Monday of \$1 a barrel, or seven per cent, at a time when OPEC is pumping too much oil and the U.S. stock market is crumbling.

"I think the funds have turned bullish on oil," after being cautious on the crude market during a year-long bear market, said Morris Greenberg, oil analyst at Lehman Brothers.

Crude on the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) for May delivery settled \$1 higher at \$15.79, a two-month high, adding to a 41-cent rise Thursday. NYMEX was closed Friday

and London's International Petroleum Exchange shut Friday and Monday.

Meanwhile, the Commodity Research Bureau's index of 21 futures, a key inflation indicator, fell sharply Monday.

Monday explosive oil rally surprised many traders. OPEC decided 10 days ago to keep its daily output ceiling of 24.52 million barrels until year's end, which pushed crude down \$1.05 last week on views that was too much oil for spring. Gasoline and heating oil rose about two cents a gallon and may heating oil soared 2.10 cents to 46.17 cents.

Mr. Greenberg said traders may have seen a buying opportunity after crude held its five-year low of \$13.75 last week, and prices tend to post a bottom in January and in March or April.

"The whole derivatives market was shaken up because of

wild moves in silver, beans and bonds and others," said Bill Billings, NYMEX trading director at Phillips Petroleum P.N.

He said derivatives traders were likely squaring positions and initiating new ones, significantly affecting price action.

Key technical indicators likely drew in the funds as well.

Victor YU, a trader at the Nikkham Energy Group in New York, said May crude oil traded above its 20, 40 and 100 day moving averages. "Crude crossed some serious moving averages and a lot of technical funds follow those."

Still, several traders were scratching their heads and said supply and demand do not justify further gains from here.

"I think oil prices will move ahead later in the year but we're not there yet," said John Hervey, vice president in the research department at Donaldson, Lufkin Jenrette. He said crude oil prices were justified staying in a \$14-\$15 range, with any level above that being "premature."

Telephone, post rates rise sharply in Iran

TEHRAN (R) — Postal rates have risen by up to 900 per cent and telephone charges by 20-40 per cent in Iran since last month, newspapers reported Monday.

The hefty rate increases were the first reported in the Iranian new year which started on March 21 after parliament voted down proposed rises in fuel and electricity prices.

Resalat newspaper said postal rates had risen by up to 900 per cent. A city letter, for instance, would now require 60 rials' (\$0.03) worth of stamps, six times more than before.

Kayhan newspaper said telephone charges had risen by 20 per cent for private clients, 30 per cent for government offices and 40 per cent for businesses.

The state-owned Iran Telecommunication Company said proceeds from telephone charge rises would be spent on expanding the rural telecommunication network, Tehran radio reported.

Israeli banks rake in the cash

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's four main commercial banks, on the path to private ownership this year, left potential buyers an impressive showing of black ink in 1993.

Bank Hapoalim, Bank Leumi, Israel Discount Bank Ltd and United Mizrahi Bank — all owned by the government — announced improved profits in annual reports published last week.

Along with the results came forecasts about Israeli economic growth, which slumped to a still respectable 3.5 per cent in 1993 after a 6.6 per cent increase in 1992 fuelled by a construction boom for a flood of immigration from the former Soviet Union.

At the high end, Bank Hapoalim predicted growth could reach six per cent in 1994, but Mizrahi, noting a

recent slump on the Tel Aviv Stock Market, forecast three to four per cent growth. Leumi and Discount took the middle ground.

Israeli banks are big players on the stock market, selling and managing mutual and provident funds, acting as brokers for clients and making loans for the purpose of buying shares.

"The vibrancy (in 1993) of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange raised significantly the banks' income from commissions, management fees and other share-related activities," capital markets writer Yehuda Sharoni said in the Maariv newspaper.

Hapoalim reported the highest profits of any of the banks in 1993 — 374 million shekels (\$125 million), a rise of 36.3 per cent over the previous

year. It attributed the increase to higher operating income from capital market activities and a 22.8 per cent drop in doubtful debt provisions. Net return on equity was 8.8 per cent.

Leumi's net profit climbed 58.1 per cent, to 370.3 million shekels (\$123.8 million). Provision for doubtful debt was 448 million shekels in 1993 compared with 637 million shekels the previous year. Net return on equity was 8.5 per cent.

Discount said 1993 consolidated net income rose 26.5 per cent to 204.6 million shekels (\$68.43 million). Provision for bad debt was 106 million shekels against 144 million in 1992. It had a net return on equity of 8.0 per cent.

Net profit rose 8.9 per cent to 135.1 million shekels (\$45.18 million) at Mizrahi. Provision for doubtful debt

climbed 5.9 per cent to 144.4 million shekels. Net return on equity was 14.1 per cent.

A decade ago, the banks' manipulation of their own shares on the Tel Aviv market led to the crash of 1983 and a \$9 billion government bailout that left the four main commercial banks in state hands.

The government now wants to cash in its shares. At the beginning of the year, it published an international tender for a controlling stake of up to 20 per cent of Leumi.

Finance Minister Avraham Shohat has said a similar tender for Hapoalim would be published this year after a decision is made on which bid to accept for Leumi.

A sell-off of Discount is expected to follow, and the suitability of potential buyers of Mizrahi is being examined.

Gulf Arabs propose pooling aircraft maintenance

MANAMA (R) — Gulf Arab states are floating the idea of a joint holding firm to take over maintenance of their civil aircraft, Kuwait Airways Corp. (KAC) Chairman Ahmad Hamad Al Mishari said Tuesday.

Sheikh Mishari told reporters that letters had been sent to heads of airlines in the Gulf Cooperation Council states.

The proposal was part of joint efforts by the GCC, grouping Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the Un-

ited Arab Emirates and Oman, to cut costs and increase airline profits.

With a proliferation of airlines up and down the Gulf, the idea is to avoid duplication of facilities at each airport.

In addition to the three long-operating airlines KAC, Saudia and Gulf Air, three other airlines have been set up in recent years — Dubai's Emirates, Qatar Airways and Oman Air.

It was not immediately clear

what reaction the more established airlines would have to such a plan and Sheikh Mishari himself did not say whether he favoured it.

Referring to his own company, he said he expected profits to drop to between \$8 million and \$10 million in 1994 from \$18 million in 1993 because of investment needed

after Iraq's 1990-91 occupation.

KAC was investing \$1.4 billion to buy new aircraft including 15 Airbus planes and three Boeing of which 11 Airbuses had already been delivered in 1992 and 1993, he said. The rest will be delivered by 1995.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY APRIL 6, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Your desire to add to your income should be tempered with a special watchfulness toward tricky individuals that could bring you more trouble than they are worth. Sick with the regular rules.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Study your duties well and plan how to execute them more efficiently. Follow your hunches which are accurate at this time.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Be alert in the morning and avoid making costly errors. You must practise more thrift now to have the security you want for your success.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Find a more sensible method for handling routine duties. Be more diplomatic when dealing with outsiders today and you will be well known.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Take care of business matters early in the day so you'll have time for social activities later. Think constructively on how to get done all you are told to do.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Study a situation at home well and take steps to improve it. You can make an excellent impression on others at this time especially to those in authority.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Discuss routine affairs

with an expert and get valuable suggestions you need. Take no risks with your reputation now if you can help it.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Go to the financial expert and gain the knowledge and backing you need. Show more devotion to family members and you will have much happiness.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Go after what you desire in a positive way and get excellent results. Come to a better understanding with the one you love and everything will be great.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have fine ideas that should be put in operation without delay. Social activities can bring happiness in the evening to all those around you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Look to a clever friend for assistance in gaining a personal aim. Study every angle of a plan you have in mind on a new project.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Let higher-ups know about a special talent you have. Be sure to keep promises you have made and be logical in their execution.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Schedule your activities well so you can easily gain your aims. Remove stumbling blocks in the path of your progress to your success.

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

INCCY
REVNY
LOACCI
GENNIE

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: JEWEL BRASS SCARCE ELICIT

Answer: What the writer on exotic wines was known for having — THE "BEST CELLAR"

THE Daily Crossword by Ronald C. Hirschfeld

ACROSS
1. Mashed dishes
6. Boston
9. Viper
12. — garden
13. Notable times
15. Strawberry's best, once
17. Rich cake
18. Monogram part: abbr.
19. Without
20. — Oakley
21. Organizes rigidly
23. Drive forward
25. Aisle
26. Goofie's goal
28. Man with a salty wit?
30. McMahon and Sullivan
31. Nunaro
32. Plant life
34. Rich coffee
38. General Henry M. Robert
41. Bessamer product
42. Collier Sam
43. Greek letter
44. Day — (fluorescent color)
46. R10
47. Scrutinize
48. Like Bermuda
52. Singer Hoss
54. Appetizer
56. Arrow of Egypt
58. Mangle
60. Bakery item
61. Tap for maple
62. Vain
63. Buffalo's lake
64. "To learn — of water"
65. — "Miserables"
66. Call for help
67. Units of force

DOWN
1. Bye-bye
2. Strayhorn's river
3. Meal eater
4. Punctual
5. Brew (tea)
6. Family jewels, for example
7. British composer
8. Shaggy forest
9. Real estate appraiser
10. Cut of beef
11. Flute prof.
12. Fence steps
15. Org.
22. Two words in a row
24. Mrs. Raines
26. Late late
27. Punched
28. Tendency
32. Stimulus
33. Stories
35. Dismal
36. Sounds of humor
37. Soon
38. Winter wear
40. Mack
45. Speechify
47. Chic
48. Set to sea
49. Matriculate: var.
50. In second
51. Emperors
53. Syrian statesman
55. Combo
57. "I cannot tell"
58. Cable: abbr.

Peanuts

HOW CAN WE KNOW IF OUR BROTHER IS GETTING BETTER IF NO ONE TELLS US ANYTHING?

I THINK I'LL GO HANG AROUND THE FRONT DESK... MAYBE I'LL HEAR SOMETHING...

THE NURSE IS HAVING TROUBLE WITH HER BOYFRIEND AND THE DOCTOR IS GOING TO SWITCH TO A METAL SEVEN-WOOD!

Mutt'n'Jeff

SURE, I GUESS MAYBE A LOT OF PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE INSIDE INFORMATION ABOUT US... MEBBE!

O.K. LIKE WHAT?

WELL, LIKE WHERE WE WERE BORN AND WHEN!

WELL, I WAS BORN IN SAN FRANCISCO ON NOVEMBER 15TH, 1907

AND UNDER THE SIGN OF THE ZODIAC I AM KNOWN AS SCORPIO!

UNDER WHAT SIGN WERE YOU BORN?

ROOM FOR RENT AND I AM KNOWN AS JEFF!

50 reported killed as fighting rages around Bosnian enclave

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnian Serb and Muslim forces clashed anew around Gorazde Tuesday as the Serb assault on the eastern Bosnian town went into its second week.

The Serb artillery and tank attack on the Muslim-led Bosnian government enclave which began on March 29 has killed 49 people and wounded 218, most of them civilians, a United Nations spokesman said.

"The situation on the southern front is getting worse," a radio operator in Gorazde said in Sarajevo Radio. "The noose around Gorazde is tightening."

Kris Janowski, spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said the casualty toll had been confirmed by two U.N. doctors working at Gorazde's main hospital. Several dozen wounded needed to be evacuated for proper treatment.

The latest fighting followed a report Monday from Sarajevo Radio that Serb forces had broken through the front line at one point. The Bosnian Serb News Agency said Tuesday that "defeated" Muslim forces were withdrawing in disarray along a key

road. A U.N. military spokesman reported Serb artillery and tank bombardments in parts of the Gorazde pocket Monday about said there was no evidence the Serbs had gained significant ground.

Major Rob Annink told a news conference in Sarajevo Bosnian Serb forces were concentrating their attack on routes going into Gorazde from the east.

Sarajevo Radio said 24 people were wounded and an unknown number killed in a Serb assault on Gorazde overnight — two years to the day after the first victim of the war in Bosnia was killed in nearby Sarajevo.

The Yugoslav News Agency, Tanjug quoted Bosnian Serb army sources as saying 100 Muslim soldiers were believed killed.

Neither account could be independently verified as the latest U.N. casualty toll only went up to Monday evening.

Tanjug said the Muslim-led Bosnian army had launched "desperate attacks on all parts of the front," while Muslim-controlled Sarajevo Radio said parts of the city were being destroyed by Serb Howitzers.

Tanjug said the Muslim forces had fired more than 1,000 mortar rounds at Serb positions over the past seven days.

The United Nations Monday announced plans to send additional military observers immediately to Gorazde and 1,000 Ukrainian peacekeeping troops within the next week or so.

The British U.N. commander for Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose, said he would visit the area Wednesday.

U.N. sources said the Serbs had refused him permission but he still planned to make the trip.

Gen. Rose said he doubted the Serbs were able to capture Gorazde, where 65,000 people are trapped.

The Serbs Monday blocked plans to send in four more military observers to join an existing four-man team. Apart from a few aid workers and doctors, they are the only international presence in Gorazde, supposedly a U.N. "safe haven."

Aid officials said the Serbs had refused entry to U.N. and Red Cross convoys Monday. The last U.S. aid convoy en-

tered Gorazde on March 22, a week before the latest Serb assault, but Mr. Janowski said food stocks were adequate for the time being.

"Those supplies are going to be running out soon and we desperately want more convoys," said Ron Redmond, spokesman in Geneva for the UNHCR.

In northern Bosnia, the Red Cross was in talks with Bosnian Serb authorities following the postponement of its plan to evacuate thousands of non-Serbs from the area.

The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) called off the operation after Serb leader Radovan Karadzic set a limit on the number he would allow to leave.

The ICRC had planned to evacuate thousands of non-Serbs after reports up to 20 Muslims and Croats had been killed in a new outbreak of "ethnic cleansing," a policy of driving out minorities by murder or terror.

Meanwhile Romania ignored Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic's international parish status Tuesday and gave him a red carpet welcome on a state visit arranged hastily to assess peace prospects in former Yugoslavia.



Police and rescue workers inspect the wreckage of a Dutch KLM Saab-Fairchild 300 which crashed near Amsterdam airport (AFP photo)

Experts seek cause of Dutch crash

AMSTERDAM (R) — Dutch experts probing the crash landing of a Royal Dutch KLM short-haul airliner near Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport in which three people died, said Tuesday engine failure was unlikely to have been the sole cause.

The Swedish-built twin turbo-prop Saab 340B, which had just taken off Monday afternoon for a city-hopper service flight to the Welsh city of Cardiff with 21 passengers and three crew aboard, ploughed into a muddy field metres from the runway as it tried to return after developing engine trouble over the North Sea.

Aviation experts said the model of airliner involved should normally have had no problem in landing on one engine.

Benno Baksteen, head of the Dutch Pilots' Association, said: "We must consider that engine failure was not the only reason for the crash."

An unnamed air traffic controller was quoted in the Dutch

media as saying the airliner down when the pilot decided to break off his attempted landing and to climb again.

The passengers included nine Britons and two Germans. The crew were all Dutch.

Two of the dead had been named as flight Captain Gerrit Lievaart and a British woman, Laura Samuel, in her mid-40s. The third, not yet officially identified, was reported to be a man from Singapore.

Thirteen other people were reported seriously injured.

Airport authorities said the dead pilot's body would be examined to determine whether a sudden illness had contributed to the crash.

Transport Minister Hanja Maij-Weggen said both the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder had been recovered and she expected the crash investigation to be completed quickly.

"I think it will be a matter of a few months rather than a year," she said.

A Transport Ministry spokesman said the crash investigation would be carried out by an independent preliminary investigator, adding that the wreckage of the aircraft was likely to be removed from the crash site Tuesday.

A four-man team from Swedish aircraft-maker Saab arrived at Schiphol late Monday to help the investigation. A Saab spokesman said this was the first time a Saab 340 had been in an accident involving injury or loss of life.

KLM has 12 of the Saab 340Bs in its short-haul fleet. Poor weather on Easter Monday has also been ruled out as a likely cause of the crash. A KLM spokesman said that at the time the plane came down, winds had dropped and the runway was dry.

The aircraft was approaching the runway when it veered to the right, clipped the ground with its wing and skidded into a field, where it exploded on impact. The fire burned out quickly.

Suit blocks dead poet's wish to be skinned

EUGENE, Ore (R) — Oregon poet Donal Eugene Russell won't get his last wish — to be skinned so that his hide could be used as cover for a volume of his poetry. His widow, Rachel Barton-Russell, settled a lawsuit brought by the state of Oregon, agreeing to have her late husband cremated. Russell, who died in February at the age of 62, left instructions in his will that the skin from his body was to be removed and tanned and then used to bind a volume of his works. Mrs. Barton-Russell, a 33-year-old law student at the University of Oregon, was prepared to honour the terms of the will by letting animal skinner remove the skin from the corpse which had been kept in a freezer. "He was very fond of his skin. He felt like it was one of his better attributes, and he really wanted it used this way," she told reporters last week after the state went to court to block the action. The state mortuary and cemetery board objected and filed suit. According to a statement released by both sides, "the controversial clause in the will not be fulfilled" and Mrs. Barton-Russell "will provide for the cremation of Donal Russell's remains." Mr. Russell died in February on his way to a doctor's appointment.

Woman born with no vagina gives birth to baby

TOKYO (R) — A Japanese woman born without a vagina had a baby 14 years after undergoing corrective surgery, the doctor who led the operation told Reuters. Professor Kihyoe Ichinohe said the baby girl was born by caesarean section in 1990. Apparently the first from a mother who had undergone such vaginal reconstruction. Doctors had delayed making the case public because the woman's husband had not known about the surgery and they feared the news might prove too big a shock, he said. "We think enough time has now elapsed to allow us safely to make our report public," said Prof. Ichinohe, now professor emeritus of Hokkaido University in northern Japan. He plans to report on the case at a medical conference in Tokyo on April 12. The woman, now 32, had the reconstructive surgery at Wakayama Medical College in central Japan when she was 14. Doctors used a new developed technique involving the implantation of a synthetic mould into the patient's body. Prof. Ichinohe said it was believed about one in 5,000 women worldwide are born without a vagina.

Sex change thwarts conscript's army dreams

BANGKOK (R) — A Thai military board turned down one eager conscript when he turned up for an interview in a miniskirt and low-cut top, newspapers reported Tuesday. The panel discovered that although Wanasevi Sribanarai, 21, was legally a man he had undergone a sex-change operation. The subject Wanasevi complained: "My dreams of serving the country have been dashed." The Nation newspaper reported. All Thai men are liable to be drafted from the age of 20.

Australian theatre company wins art award

BOGOTA (R) — An Australian theatre company has won a United Nations Arts Award for its performance at the capital city's International Theatre Festival, a statement released by the event's organisers said. The statement said the Handsman Theatre Company had won the Promotion of the Arts Award from the U.N. cultural agency UNESCO for its play Four Little Girls, at the IVbero American Theatre Festival, which ended on April 3. It said the international jury sent by UNESCO to the festival chose the company's interpretation of a play written by the famous Spanish painter Pablo Picasso for its "technical perfection (and) high poetic and imaginative quality." The five-member jury included French theatre director Jorge Lavelli. Actors, dancers, musicians and other artists from more than 25 countries participated in the 12-day festival, described by its organisers as the largest in South America.

Zulu march in S. Africa ends peacefully

EMPANGENI, South Africa (R) — About 10,000 Zulu royalists marched peacefully through Empangeni in northern Natal Tuesday despite fears of a confrontation with security forces over emergency regulations in the region.

Police said there had been no reports of violent incidents. Zulus, many armed with fighting sticks, spears and other weapons, marched to a cluster of churches near the Empangeni town centre where a memorandum was presented to an Independent Electoral Commission officials.

Police said they would investigate charges of contravention of emergency regulations against organisers of the march, which was to demonstrate support for Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini's call for a sovereign state in post-apartheid South Africa.

Police spokeswoman Major Margaret Kruger told Reuters police had avoided trying to disarm marchers because this could have caused bloodshed. President F.W. de Klerk imposed a state of emergency in Natal and adjoining KwaZulu black homeland last Thursday to halt endemic political violence and prepare for free and fair elections in the country's first all-race poll later this month.

Soldiers with flak jackets and automatic rifles stood guard on street corners in Empangeni, a spread-out centre for business and light industry 200 kilometres north of Durban.

The army's regular 121 Battalion, made up of ethnic Zulus, is based nearby.

The local offices of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) was cordoned off with razor wire.

More than 10,000 people have died during the past 10 years in political violence in KwaZulu-Natal, mainly involving Zulu supporters of the ANC and the rival Inkatha.

A Zulu march in Johannesburg last week turned into a bloodbath with more than 50 people killed.

Hundreds of Zulu royalists waving fighting sticks and shields jogged chanting around the starting point for Tuesday's march as a police helicopter clattered overhead.

Police Major Margaret Kruger had earlier said carrying traditional weapons contravened emergency regulations. "There is definitely no permission granted to allow these people to carry these weapons. We will endeavour to see how the situation develops. We do not want to forcibly disarm them if it is too dangerous to disarm them. We don't want to provoke violence," Maj. Kruger told reporters.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Atomic power workers picket in Moscow

MOSCOW (AP) — Carrying signs saying "pay your debts," more than 150 workers representing all nine of Russia's nuclear power plants picketed outside the Russian White House Tuesday to demand their unpaid wages. Russia's nuclear plants, which produce 12 per cent of the country's electricity, are short on both money and fuel and have not paid some employees for three months. Businesses and individual consumers across the nation are partly to blame, because many are not paying their bills on time. The government no longer makes up the shortfall. Regulatory officials and environmentalists worry that maintenance is being neglected and safety is declining, especially at Chernobyl-type reactors. Nuclear workers have not walked off their jobs for safety reasons, but they have raised their voices in increasingly loud protests in recent weeks. "We don't have a right to strike, but we do have a right to meet with the president," said a sign carried Tuesday by one demonstrator in front of the White House, the 19-story white marble building that formerly housed the parliament and is now government headquarters.

Russian pilot 'was teaching kids to fly'

MOSCOW (R) — A Russian government commission investigating the crash of an Airbus 310 in which 75 people were killed said Tuesday one of the crew was teaching his children to pilot the plane minutes before it crashed. A commission statement did not say directly that this was the reason for the March 23 crash in Siberia. The statement, read to Reuters over the telephone, said the flight recorders showed that the scheduled Aeroflot flight from Moscow to Hong Kong was proceeding without any problems until it was passing over the Siberian city of Novokuznetsk. It then said: "It was established that present in the cockpit were a son and a daughter of a crew member who, in violation of flight rules, was demonstrating and explaining to them the principles of piloting a plane. Four minutes after passing Novokuznetsk the plane deviated to the right more than it should which resulted in a sharp loss of altitude and collision with the ground." The flight recorders were examined in France before being shipped back to Russia. The statement was reporting preliminary results of the investigation.

U.S. PoW activist leaves Vietnam

HANOI (R) — A U.S. activist trying to find living American prisoners of war left Vietnam Tuesday without being allowed to visit every facility he wanted to see. Former Republican congressman Billy Henderson from McLean, Virginia, said he was disappointed about the way he had been treated. "Vietnam says we can go anywhere we want. It is not true," he told Reuters by telephone from Hanoi's Noi Bai Airport before catching a flight to Hong Kong. "They say we can meet anybody we need. It is also not true. And they say we can stay as long as we want... but they asked me to leave the country... I'm very disappointed," he said. Vietnamese officials said Mr. Henderson was leaving after his visa, already extended for a week, expired Monday night. The Foreign Ministry said he had been allowed to visit three camps he had asked to see in Thanh Hoa, Ha Nam Ninh and Ha Tay provinces. "Regrettably, there were some news reports different from reality which obviously run counter to the Vietnamese side's goodwill cooperation offered to him," a ministry spokesman said. Mr. Henderson and two associates, Beth Stewart, head of the PoW Publicity Fund, and Lamont Gaston, president of an organisation called Vietnam based in Rockford, Illinois, were in Vietnam for two weeks. Ms. Stewart and Mr. Gaston were believed to be leaving with Mr. Henderson.

Peronists head for poll win

BUENOS AIRES (R) — The ruling Peronist Party is poised to sweep Argentina's April 10 election for a Constitutional Assembly, paving the way for President Carlos Menem's re-election bid in 1995. Independent pollsters predict the Peronists — who have won every national vote since 1987 — will carry most provinces, matching or even topping their 43 per cent showing in October's congressional election. Mr. Menem's chance to run for a second term is virtually guaranteed by a pact he signed with his predecessor, Radical Party Chairman Raul Alfonsín, to reform the National Charter. Peronist and Radical constitutional farmers are expected to take about two-thirds of the 305 seats in the assembly that will rewrite Argentina's basic law this year.

Ramos names new military chief

MANILA (AP) — President Fidel Ramos Monday named the army commander, who negotiated an end to a military rebellion four years ago, as the new military chief of staff. Mr. Ramos nominated army Lt. Gen. Arturo Enrile to succeed Gen. Lisandro Abadía, who will complete his three-year tour of duty this week. Gen. Enrile's nomination requires confirmation by the Congressional Commission on Appointments. Gen. Enrile, 53, graduated in 1962 from the Philippine Military Academy, where he served as superintendent from 1989 until his appointment as army chief in 1991. During a coup attempt against then President Corason Aquino in December 1989, Gen. Enrile represented her government in talks with mutinous troops, who later surrendered.

Rutskoi launches campaign to get rid of Yeltsin

MOSCOW (R) — Former Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi, freed from prison under a parliamentary amnesty, launched a new campaign Tuesday to remove President Boris Yeltsin and his government from office.

In an interview in the Communist newspaper Pravda, Mr. Rutskoi fiercely attacked the president and ruled out any possibility of an end to confrontation as long as Mr. Yeltsin remained in office.

"There should be no illusions about the possibility of any changes for the better under this president and this government," he said. "That is why it is necessary to stop playing with consensus or agreements and get down to work — to change the authorities by legal methods."

It was Mr. Rutskoi's toughest attack since he and other leaders of the armed revolt against Mr. Yeltsin last October were released from prison under a parliamentary amnesty in February.

Mr. Rutskoi, 46, said he was not going to leave politics and was absolutely unrepentant over his role in the October bloodshed, laying all the blame on Mr. Yeltsin.

Mr. Rutskoi launched the uprising against what he said was an illegal dictatorship by calling on armed supporters to storm the Moscow mayor's office and main television centre.

Mr. Yeltsin, some members of parliament and public groupings are working on a "memorandum on civic accord" in Russia, which they hope will provide for a political ceasefire.

China probes 'new crimes' by top dissident

BEIJING (R) — China said Tuesday it was detaining the country's top dissident while police investigate him for "suspected new criminal offences" following his September parole after almost 15 years in prison.

"The Beijing Public Security Department has decided to investigate suspected new criminal offences by Wei Jingsheng," the official Xinhua News Agency said.

"Wei is being interrogated and placed under surveillance by the Beijing Public Security Department in accordance with the law because he violated the law on many occasions and is suspected of having committed new crimes when he was deprived of his political rights and on parole," Xinhua said.

Mr. Wei, known as the father of China's Democracy Movement, was grabbed by police last Friday when attempting to return to Beijing from the nearby port city of Tianjin.

His disappearance into police custody seemed sure to further inflame the debate over China's human-rights record, which Washington has said

must improve if the country is to maintain its preferential trading privileges with the United States.

Mr. Wei became a central figure in last month's acrimonious Beijing visit by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher after police detained him for 30 hours as part of a wider sweep against dissidents before Mr. Christopher arrived.

Most of the other activists rounded up were released after short periods in detention. Mr. Wei left Beijing for Tianjin, and his Friday attempt to return marked his first foray back to the capital.

Xinhua said Saturday that police had let Mr. Wei go after questioning him, but his family and associates said they had not heard from the dissident.

The Foreign Ministry said Monday Mr. Wei had violated the conditions of his September parole, when he was freed six months short of completing his 15-year sentence, and just before the international vote on Beijing's bid for the 2000 Olympics.

Mr. Wei's parole ended on March 29, but he is still subject

to three years' deprivation of his "political rights," which strips him of freedom of speech and assembly as well as subjecting him to numerous other restrictions.

The U.S. State Department Friday issued a statement of regret at Mr. Wei's detention. Mr. Wei is by far the most prominent of the handful of political dissidents remaining in China, and since his release has remained uncowed by official warnings to stop seeing foreign reporters and diplomats and stop providing essays and articles to foreign publications.

The human-rights row between Beijing and Washington is growing increasingly touchy during the run-up to U.S. President Bill Clinton's June decision on extending China's most favoured nation (MFN) trade status.

Mr. Clinton last year made MFN renewal in 1994 conditional on human-rights improvements, a linkage Beijing rejects. Diplomats say both sides are now struggling to find some common ground on the MFN

issue, with such international organisations as the World Bank saying any U.S. move to end MFN treatment for China would be a disaster for both countries.

In a separate development, a Chinese student who tried to lay flowers in Tiananmen Square, site of the 1989 pro-democracy protests crushed by the army, was taken away by armed police Tuesday, a witness said.

Tuesday marks the Chinese Festival of Qingming, known as the tomb-sweeping holiday when people traditionally pay respect to the dead.

The witness said that plainclothes and uniformed police surrounded the short young man as soon as he entered the vast square carrying a wreath. After he showed police a student identification card, he was immediately put into a vehicle and driven away, the witness said.

Police in Beijing are extremely tense in advance of the fifth anniversary of the June 4, 1989 army crackdown in Tiananmen Square in which hundreds if not thousands

Nigeria face first tough challenge in cup semifinals

TUNIS (R) — Favourites Nigeria, who have sauntered to the semifinals, face their first real challenge in the African Nations Cup finals on Wednesday.

The world cup finalists play defending champions Ivory Coast in the first of the day's semifinals at the El Manzah stadium in Tunis, followed by Mali's meeting with Zambia.

Nigeria, who have yet to be extended at the tournament and have reached the final four with the minimum of effort, will be forced to increase their workrate against an Ivorian team brimming with confidence.

The ambitious Ivorians upset Ghana 2-1 in the quarter-finals on Sunday after gambling with a three-man attack and say they intend to employ the same tactic against Nigeria.

"We are very confident after our win over Ghana," said Captain Serge-Alain Maguy, a survivor of the team that was beaten 4-1 by Nigeria in last year's World Cup qualifiers.

"We are out to avenge our defeat in Lagos," he added.

SOCCER

Nigeria, who have scored five goals in the competition and kept three clean sheets, will again be relying on the attacking prowess of giant striker Richi Yekini.

His four goals in the competition make him joint top scorer with Ivorian striker Joel Tchihi, who is doubtful for Wednesday's match after pulling a muscle against Ghana.

Tournament outsiders Mali hope to continue their giant-

killing run, which has already claimed the scalps of Tunisia and Egypt, against the Zambians.

"We never believed we would get this far but now that we are in the semifinals we intend going all the way to the final," said goalkeeper and captain Ousmane Fardou.

Zambia, another unfancied team, have already achieved their pre-tournament aim of a place in the semifinals, despite some mediocre performances.

"We have not been playing well," said Swiss-based winger Jonson Bwalya. "But we hope to change that in the semifinals."

The team face the possibility of playing uncapped goalkeeper Martin Mwamba in place of James phiri, who suffered an ankle injury and was battling to be fit for the semifinals.

Fame and fiasco at the Aintree Grand National

LONDON (R) — Of all the horse races in all the world, the Grand National was least in need of the great 1993 fiasco.

The catalogue of disaster which unfolded at Aintree that day fell upon a race already over-endowed with tradition and drama.

Last year's farce which resulted in the event being declared void added fresh, unwanted dimensions as the world witnessed from its armchair the mother of all foul-ups.

Now, after a series of major modifications, race officials are confident all will be well on Saturday. Captain Becher can sleep easy in his grave once more.

It was the bold captain who fell at the brook in 1839 on the first running of the race, won, appropriately, by a horse called Lottery.

Becher's brook has become probably the world's most well-known jumping obstacle. Although less formidable than it used to be, it still provides an exciting spectacle as up to 40 horses pour over.

Other fences, such as the chair, Valentine's brook and the canal turn, are all part of the Aintree folklore.

Then there are the horses: Golden Miller who in 1934 became the only horse to win the Cheltenham Gold Cup and Grand National in the same season — a feat French-trained favourite the Fellow seeks to equal on Saturday.

Sheila's Cottage, the 1948 winner, who repaid jockey Arthur Thompson by hitting off his finger.

Devoe Loch, who in 1956 went sprawling to defeat in the final 300 metres after victory had seemed assured with all Britain cheering him on behalf of his owner, the mother of the nation's quoco.

Poinavon, the winner in 1967, who was so far behind he avoided the worst pile-up ever at the 23rd fence, galloping to a shock 100-1 success.

Red Rum, a record three-times winner in the 1970s. An average performer elsewhere, Red Rum seemed to sprout wings over the 30 national fences.

Aldanti, who in 1981 recovered from severe fitness setbacks to carry to victory jockey Bob Champion, who had fought a successful battle against cancer.

Jockeys love it. There is no place quite like Aintree to set the cervics jingling.

The odds are you will probably fall or fail to complete, but the joy of winning is one of sport's supreme moments.

Harry Wragg, who later turned trainer, was only 17 when he rode Battleship to victory in 1938.

At the other end of the scale, Dick Saunders won the 1982 national on Gritter at the age of 48.

For sheer agony it's hard to beat the Devon Loch drama, an afternoon still etched in the mind of the horse's jockey that day, Dick Francis — now a highly successful thriller writer.

Son of War outstays favourites in Irish National

DUBLIN (R) — Son of War stormed through the mud to beat the more fancied runners and win the Irish Grand National at Fairyhouse on Monday.

The 12-1 chance, ridden by Frank Woods, forged ahead after the final jump as the front-running Nuffie stopped to almost a walk in the desperate conditions before finishing second.

The heavily-backed favourite High Peak (9-4) was never in the running at any stage and was eventually pulled up.

Of the other fancied mounts, Belvedereian fell at the sixth from home and Deep Bramble was also pulled up.

Son of War provided trainer Peter McCreery with the biggest success of his career. His late father, also Peter, trained the 1985 runner-up Seskin Bridge.

It was also a case of like father like son for winning rider Woods whose father Paddy was victorious in 1963.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMARA HIRSCH
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ONE HIGH CARD TOO MANY

East-West vulnerable. West makes the value bid. Went led the king of spades and declarer could count nine sure tricks—seven trumps and the ace of spades and diamonds. One method of trying for a 10th trick would be to take the diamond finesse. However, that stands less than a 50 percent chance of success, since East is marked with a high club by the opening lead with both the ace and king West would surely have led a club rather than a spade. Declarer looked around for something better.

An almost sure-fire method presented itself right at the opening gun. Declarer followed low from dummy to the first trick, then got rid of an embarrassing card from hand—the jack of spades! No matter what the defenders did, declarer would eventually win, draw trumps and then take the marked finesse of the ten of spades for the fulfilling trick.

The contract will fail if South does not unblock the jack of spades at trick one. If declarer retains that card, a finesse for the queen of spades can still be taken successfully, but as long as West does not cover declarer will be locked in hand with no way to get to the table to cash the ace of spades.

The bidding:
West North East South
1* Pass 2* 4V
Pass Pass Pass
Opening lead: King of ♠

Did you resort to a finesse in an attempt to land your four-heart contract after West led the king of spades? Incidentally, which finesse are we talking about?

Note East's raise to two spades, despite only three-card support. With only one side-suit stopped and a weak doubler in the bargain, a response of one no trump was out of the question. Nothing the opponents did could talk South out of

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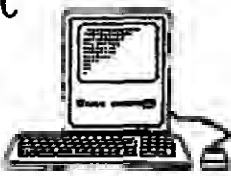
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Al Faisali again assured of top spot

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — As the Kingdom's first division soccer championship nears its end, the picture is finally getting clearer and most teams already have a good idea about their place in the 12 team standings.

Titleholders Al Faisali can now officially begin celebrating their second successive year atop Jordanian soccer following their 2-0 victory over Al Baqaa in one of the postponed matches of the 19th week. The win gave Al Faisali 48 points in the overall standings — a feat even Al Wihdat or Al Hussein cannot match even if they win all their remaining matches.

Al Faisali still have three matches before the competition concludes April 22. They have so far maintained the best scoring record (41-10) and have only lost one match — 1-0 to Al Hussein.

The 1993 title will be Al Faisali's eighth during the past 13 seasons. They also clinched the title in 1983, '85, '86, '88, '89, '90 and '92.

The loss kept Al Baqaa in eighth place for now as they could not keep up with the league leaders and only tried to minimise their striking ability.

Al Faisali's star Jiryes Tadros scored his team's first goal from a header in the 35th minute. Despite rough play which the referee sometimes chose to overlook, Al Faisali seemed intent not to let anything spoil their day as Khaled Awad netted in the second goal in the 59th minute.

In the other postponed match, Al Hussein jumped to third place after crushing Al Yarmouk 4-1 who thus lost hope of a place in the first division.

Al Hussein, now fighting with Al Wihdat and Al Ahli for second place seemed determined to advance their standing as they took total control early on in the match at Al Salt stadium.

Munib Gharaibeh opened the score in the 15th minute, followed by a second goal by Ayman Nasri in the 28th minute.

Khaled Khatatbeh ended the first half 3-0 when he scored Al Hussein's third goal in the 43th minute.

Khatatbeh again scored in the 78th minute before Al Yarmouk's Abdul Fattah Abbadi netted in his team's sole goal from a corner kick in the 80th minute.

Al Yarmouk thus remained in last place with 17 points and the worst scoring record (19-40).

The upcoming 20th week of action will be quite decisive for teams vying for runner up position, and particularly for the last four, struggling to avoid relegation.

Al Arabi plays Al Fuhais Wednesday in a vital match for both teams who are now in 9th and 10th places. Al Arabi have 27 points in the standings after their 1-0 win over Al Ramtha last week.

Their recent 2-2 and 3-3 draws with Al Wihdat and Al Qadissieh have enabled them to draw with Al Baqaa in overall points. Therefore a win would greatly benefit their plight and put Al Baqaa and Al Jazireh in a difficult position.

Meanwhile it is not clear if Al Fuhais, who threatened to pull out of the competition following their loss to Al Wihdat last week, will play the rest of their matches. Al Fuhais lodged a complaint with the Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF) citing that the penalty which gave Al Wihdat a 2-1 win last week was unwarranted, while the

referee had failed to award them a penalty on a more serious and clear tackle.

The JSF has rejected any possible altering of the result, but promised to follow up on the complaint with the match's referees.

If Al Fuhais carry out their threat of pulling out, all their results in the competition will be cancelled and they will automatically be relegated and fined JD 5,000.

On Thursday, Al Yarmouk take on Al Faisali in a match that is unlikely to change anything for both teams.

Bottom of the league Al Yarmouk have become the first team to officially bid the first division farewell after three big defeats: 4-2 to Al Fuhais, 5-0 to Al Ahli and 4-1 to Al Hussein.

In another match, Al Qadissieh, who have maintained the best record with only one loss in the second leg of the competition, will meet Al Ramtha who seem to be content with a halfway standing in the league.

Al Ramtha have had a series of disappointing results, losing 1-0 to Al Arabi, 3-1 to Al Wihdat and Al Yarmouk.

Most onlookers contend that Al Ramtha should be happy with keeping their place among the top teams this season especially after many top players deserted the team because of differences with the club's management.

On Friday, Sahab will take on Al Hussein at Mafraq stadium. A win will give third placed Al Hussein a big boost as they strive to capture second place. Meanwhile, Sahab are expected to give all they have got to move from 11th place where they have been stuck after losing three consecutive matches to Al Ahli, Al Ramtha and Fuhais.

Amman's international stadium will witness the most heated clash between second placed Al Wihdat and fourth placed Al Ahli.

Al Wihdat have only lost four matches this season. Their latest 2-1 and 3-1 victories over Al Fuhais and Al Ramtha enabled them to hold on to their advanced position with 37 points.

Meanwhile, Al Ahli, who maintained second place throughout most of the sea-

son, dropped after some unexpected results and are now in fourth place after losing to Sahab 3-1 last week.

Al Jazireh and Al Baqaa, who were both in real danger of relegation earlier in the competition have maintained 7th and 8th places for now after impressive comebacks in the past weeks.

As they clash in the last match of the week, Al Jazireh will strive to continue their record after beating Al Qadissieh 3-2, Al Ahli 2-1 and drawing with Al Faisali and Al Hussein 1-1. Al Baqaa also impressed fans after their 2-0 upset of Al Hussein. Together with Al Qadissieh, they have become the surprise team of the second leg in which they beat Al Fuhais 2-0, Al Ramtha 4-2, Al Arabi 1-0 and drew with Al Wihdat 1-1 and Al Ahli 0-0.

STANDINGS AFTER 20TH WEEK

Team	P	W	D	GD	L	GF	GA	Pts.
Faisali	19	14	2	2	1	41	10	48
Wihdat	19	9	4	2	4	22	17	37
Hussein	19	8	5	2	4	28	17	36
Ahli	19	8	4	1	6	29	20	33
Qadissieh	19	6	5	3	5	29	23	31
Ramtha	19	8	2	1	8	29	25	29
Jazireh	19	4	8	—	7	24	26	28
Baqaa	19	7	2	2	8	18	27	27
Arabi	19	5	6	—	8	24	35	27
Fuhais	19	6	1	1	11	17	32	21
Sahab	19	4	3	2	10	19	27	20
Yarmouk	19	5	—	2	12	19	40	17

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DEAD AGAIN		Olivier Gruner IN NEMESIS		CONCORD '1' Hook		Opening Soon A political comedy Forbidden X Forbidden		Two more weeks before the performances of the political comedy "Ahlan Arab Summit Conference" Come to an end	The theatre reopens Wednesday April 6 To present the last two weeks of a play: "Ahlan (welcome) Arab Summit Conference" The theatre is closed Saturdays and Sundays
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30					
				CONCORD '2' Demolition Man					
				Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30					

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sudan detains Mahdi — opposition

CAIRO (R) — Sudanese intelligence services detained former Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi for questioning on Tuesday, his opposition Umma Party said in a statement. "At noon today a security force led by Captain Hassan Mohammad Ahmad Kheiri came to the house of Mr. Sadeq Al Mahdi and told him to come to security headquarters without stating any reason," said senior party official Mubarak Al Mahdi. It was the fourth time the Oxford-educated Mahdi, 57, has been detained in the past year. Previously, he has been released after a few hours questioning.

Berlusconi suspends government talks

MILAN (R) — Media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi said on Tuesday he had suspended talks with his Northern League election allies on forming a new government in Italy. He said he had cancelled a meeting with League officials due to be held on Wednesday. Mr. Berlusconi told reporters he would wait for President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro to nominate a prime minister before offering to form a government. Mr. Berlusconi's decision comes after heated arguments with Northern League leader Umberto Bossi, one of his allies in the right-wing Freedom Alliance that won last week's election, over who should head the next government.

Qatar's parliament chief in Tehran

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's parliament speaker, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, said Tuesday that Qatar was a trusted friend of Tehran's and a partner in some key projects, Tehran Radio reported. Mr. Nateq-Nouri said he would discuss economic and political issues with Ali Ben Khalifa Al Hithni, chairman of Qatar's Advisory Council, a sort of parliament, who arrived in Tehran for an official visit Tuesday. "Our relations with Qatar are very close, warm and ancient," Mr. Nateq-Nouri told the radio. He said issues to be discussed with Mr. Hithni included a proposed project to pipe fresh water to Qatar and a massive shared gas field in the Gulf.

Iranian daily dismisses U.S. charges

NICOSIA (AP) — A state-run Iranian daily on Tuesday dismissed U.S. accusations that Iran was not cooperating to combat the international trade in drugs. "Dozens of Iranian security forces are being killed or injured by drug smugglers every week and the country is overstretching its financial resources in trying to cut the flow of drugs through its territory," the English-language Tehran Times said. The paper said Washington was using the issue as a ruse to "single out the countries that are opposed to its policies for chastisement." In an annual U.S. review of global cooperation against drugs issued Friday, President Clinton accused Iran, Syria, Nigeria and Burma of not helping in international anti-drug efforts. The findings bars the four countries from U.S. foreign aid and U.S. support for loans from international lending institutions.

Wall Street stocks soar, draw bargain hunters

NEW YORK (R) — Wall Street stocks soared Tuesday as a steep drop in interest rates unleashed a flood of buy orders, with investors looking for bargains after the market's recent fall. The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed up 82.06 points, or 2.3 per cent, at 3,675.41, based on early and unofficial data. In the broader market, advancing issues beat out declines by a huge 7-to-1 margin on active trading of more than 360 million shares on the New York Stock Exchange. The NASDAQ index was up a sharp 22.62 points — more than three per cent — at 750.03 (see earlier story inside).

Local bank signs deal with Palestine bank

AMMAN (Petra) — The Amman Investment Bank (AIB) Ltd. Tuesday signed a memorandum under which terms the two banks will operate as corresponding banks of each other, AIB director general Maher Shukri announced. Mr. Shukri said the memorandum, which he and Palestine Bank Director General Hashem Al Shawwa, signed, aims to promote economic integration between Jordan and the occupied lands through giving Jordan a distinguished role in investments in the Palestinian economy. "We seek to mix between the Jordanian and Palestinian capital," said Mr. Shukri, pointing that the Palestine Bank and the Amman Investment Bank had a common interest.

Aharon Remez, first air force commander, died at 75

TEL AVIV (AP) — Major General Aharon Remez, the first commander of Israel's air force, died after a long illness, Israeli newspapers reported Monday. Remez also served as a legislator for the Labour Party, as minister of transport and as ambassador to Britain in a long public service career. Remez died Sunday and was buried on Monday at Jerusalem's military cemetery with full military honours. He was eulogised by one of his successors in the air force command post, President Ezer Weizman.

Tunisia, Algeria say no to fundamentalism

TUNIS (R) — The presidents of Tunisia and Algeria said on Monday they agreed their countries should take the path of democracy but they opposed what they called Islamic fanaticism. The announcement by Tunisia's Zine Abidine Ben Ali and Algeria's Liamine Zourol came at the end of a two-day visit to Tunis by Mr. Zourol, his first since he took office two months ago. "The two presidents reiterated their constant commitment to their two countries' move on the way of democracy, pluralism and promoting human rights."

Iran attends pipeline talks in Turkmenistan

TEHRAN (R) — Iranian Oil Minister Gholamreza Agazadeh is in Turkmenistan for talks on building an oil pipeline from the former Soviet republic through Iran and Turkey to Europe, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported. It said the meeting in Ashkhabad will be attended by oil and energy ministers from Iran, Turkey, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan as well as some European ambassadors. It did not give further details. Tehran Radio had said in March that Iran and Turkmenistan had agreed to study building an oil pipeline from Turkmenistan to Tehran with a capacity of 80,000 to 140,000 barrels per day and to set up a joint committee to study the project. It said the pipeline, proposed by Turkmenistan, would extend to Tehran's oil refinery via Sari, a city 180 kilometres northeast of Tehran and about the same distance from the Turkmen border. Turkmenistan wants to pump between 80,000 and 140,000 bpd through the pipeline, the radio added.

U.S. ambassador visits Maronite patriarch

BEIRUT (AP) — Beleaguered Christians took heart from an unprecedented Easter visit by the U.S. ambassador to the seat of the Maronite Catholic church, newspapers reported Tuesday. They viewed Ambassador Mark Hambley's trip to the mountain-top church at Bikiri Monday as a show of support by the Clinton administration to Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir, spiritual head of the one million Maronites. The visit came two days after Patriarch Sfeir launched a scathing attack on the Lebanese government, accusing it of ignoring a reconciliation agreement that ended the 1975-90 war between Christians and Muslims and for favouring Muslims in public jobs. His Easter message came after a month-long army crackdown on right-wing Christians, whom the government holds responsible for a Feb. 27 Maronite church bombing that killed 10 worshippers. He complained about the "imbalance in distributing the roles" by Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's half-Christian, half-Muslim government.

Yemeni rivals trade charges

SANAA (Agencies) — Political rivals in Yemen traded charges on Tuesday about who was to blame for the failure of reconciliation talks in Oman meant to avert a slide towards civil war.

Western diplomats expected Yemenis to step away from the brink because, they argued, civil war would be disastrous for the impoverished country which only last year appeared heading for economic takeoff.

But their optimism was not shared by many Yemenis as a war of words heated up between President Ali Abdullah Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) and the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) of his southern rival and vice-president, Ali Salem Al Beidh.

The beleaguered currency, the rial, fell to 65 to the U.S. dollar on news of the failure of talks between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh at the Omani resort of Salalah on Monday, raising the spectre of a Somali-type conflict that would tear the country apart.

It had earlier risen to 55 rials to the dollar when the two men, who fell out in a power struggle eight months ago, agreed to meet at the invitation of Oman's influential Sultan Qaboos.

President Saleh on Tuesday wound up two days of talks in Qatar.

Mr. Saleh said in a departure statement in Doha that he briefed the emir, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani, on "the effort made to contain the political crisis there (in Yemen) and move ahead with implementation of the national reconciliation accord without delay or hesitation."

Mr. Saleh arrived Monday from Oman.

Oman's foreign minister, Youssef Ben Alawi, said that Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh agreed on some principles to end their eight-month-old rift, but could not agree on a joint communiqué.

Earlier Tuesday, Mr. Beidh's party issued a statement in Aden, accusing northern forces of assassinating Ahmad Khaled Seif, whom it described as a prominent member of the party, in Taiz, 200 kilometres north of Sanaa.

The statement quoted witnesses as saying he was shot Monday afternoon by gunmen in a speeding car. He was the 153rd victim of the north's terrorist plot against the Socialist Party, the statement said.

In Oman, Mr. Ben Alawi said his country would consult with Jordan about pulling out joint military observers, installed to keep the troops apart following the clashes.

Diplomats in Yemen, who did not want to be named, said a pan-Arab peacekeeping force under the auspices of the Arab League was under discussion to avert a civil war until reforms were in place.



LOOSENING THE CHAINS: Israeli soldiers lead an armoured half-track on a semi-trailer as they evacuate the Israeli army headquarters in Gaza City in the occupied Gaza Strip on Tuesday. Israel continued a partial pullout from the Gaza Strip and Jericho ahead of handing over partial authority to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) sometime this month (AFP photo)

Guests file claims for 'missing' valuables in Amman hotel blaze

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — At least four guests have filed complaints that someone had spirited away cash and valuables from their abandoned rooms during a blaze at Amman's Forte Grand Hotel, hotel officials and one British tourist said Tuesday.

The deputy general manager of Forte Grand, Amman Kanaan, said the hotel carried insurance and the claims of theft and other losses of guests would be promptly dealt with.

"We accept all claims of the guests at face value and process them," Mr. Kanaan told the Jordan Times. "We have received some claims and they will be looked into through the proper channels."

Patrick McCafferty, a Briton who was occupying a third-floor room at the hotel during the fire, which broke out around 5.30 a.m. on Monday and was brought under control in about an hour, said he had lost his wallet which he had inadvertently left behind as he and his wife fled their room.

"Strangely enough, my wife's jewelry, which was left on the dressing table near the bed, was not touched, but my wallet, which was near the door, was missing when we returned to the room around 8.30 a.m.," Mr. McCafferty told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview from Aqaba.

According to Mr. McCafferty, who operates a London-based shipping business, "several others" in his tour group of 28 people and at least another guest had similar experiences. "Some lost cash and others lost gold and jewelry," he said.

Others who have reportedly filed claims and an Iraqi woman, who friends said had lost all her jewelry and cash,

were not available for immediate comment to the Jordan Times.

The hotel had about 240 guests at the time of the blaze, but no serious casualties were reported as a direct cause of the fire. One Italian guest died of a heart attack as he was rushing out of the hotel and 11 others suffered light injuries and smoke inhalation, according to officials.

According to the officials and hotel executives, primary investigations have not found any indication of foul play and that the fire could have been started by a burning cigarette butt or electrical fault.

Charles Barker, the hotel's general manager, said Monday initial inquiries had shown that the fire was caused by a burning cigarette carelessly tossed on the carpet.

It was the second fire at a major Amman hotel in two years. In March 1992, a faulty electric circuit caused a fire at the Inter-Continental Hotel, killing an Iraqi businessman who was caught in a stalled elevator.

In December 1994, a blaze at the Safeway Department Store, also blamed on a faulty circuit, injured more than 300 people.

Mr. Kanaan, the Forte Grand executive, said the hotel was asking all those who might have lost valuables and cash in the fire or the ensuing panic to make a formal claim. But he declined to discuss whether the hotel suspected anyone of having taken advantage of the melee to pocket valuables in the guest rooms.

Mustafa Nouredin, a retired police officer who is now security chief of Forte Grand, said security forces and hotel staff sealed off the premises immediately after the blaze started and it was "impossible for any unauthorised person to have entered the hotel."

"We are launching a thor-

ough investigations into the charges," said Mr. Nouredin.

In the meantime, he said, the hotel stood ready to extend help in securing police certificates which are essential for those who want to replace missing driving licences and, in some cases, credit cards.

At least three of the complaints came from guests who occupied the third floor of the eight-storey hotel and another came from a guest who had a second-floor room.

Other complaints were settled when hotel security staff conducted thorough searches of the rooms after their occupants complained of "thefts."

"In most cases we found that the missing items were very much in the rooms and all it needed was a close search," he said. "People tend to forget things and scramble things around in panic, particularly in situations of fire."

An official at the Civil Defence Department (CDD) who identified himself only as the assistance duty officer said CDD personnel were not concerned with security-related matters while fighting fires.

"Our job is fight first, rescue people and provide ambulance services," the officer told the Jordan Times. "We do our job, and leave it to the police department to take care of security."

No immediate comment was available from the police department.

Mr. McCafferty, who declined to discuss the contents of his missing wallet except that it contained his driving licence and credit cards, said none of his tour group had allowed the fire or the loss of valuables to disrupt their trip.

"Such incidents could happen anywhere, and we are not going to allow such things to disrupt our vacation," he said. "We are enjoying the traditional Jordanian hospitality and warmth."

Assad concludes visit to Egypt

CAIRO (R) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad returned home on Tuesday after talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, apparently fretting that quick progress, on Palestinian self-rule has eclipsed Syrian-Israeli peace talks.

Mr. Assad left without any public statement. Syrian and Egyptian officials declined all comment on what the two men had discussed during meetings which lasted close to six hours.

But Mr. Mubarak, who has played a key role in rehabilitating Syria internationally by coaxing it into the peace process, hinted that February's Hebron massacre and Israel's subsequent preoccupation with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) left Mr. Assad feeling out in the cold.

"I want to say we talked about peace. After the summit between President Assad and (U.S.) President (Bill) Clinton there was great hope, if only the Hebron incident had not happened," he told reporters at Cairo airport.

"It was this which obstructed and confused the peace process," he added.

Arab diplomats say that Syria feels the PLO-Israel deal has severely harmed the Arabs because it satisfies Israeli demands at the expense of the Palestinians.

Two months ago, Mr. Assad was basking in the apparent certainty that his new post cold war strategy for Syria had paid off. Not only did he meet Mr. Clinton in Geneva but the U.S. president did some diplomatic spade work for him, assuring the world that Mr. Assad's guarded words were offering Israel normalised ties.

Israel was courting Damascus, for decades its arch-foe, as the Palestinian self-rule agreement that had enraged Mr. Assad missed a December deadline for the start of Israeli withdrawal and seemed headed for long stagnation.

Jewish settler Baruch Goldstein changed all that when he slaughtered dozens of Arabs in Hebron on Feb. 25 and put the PLO-Israel deal in jeopardy.

Mr. Assad has also learnt, the painful way, that rapprochement with Washington only goes so far.

Official Syrian media screamed foul last week when the Clinton administration kept Damascus on a list of countries allegedly involved in the international drugs trade, saying the move was politically inspired.

Some State Department officials argued for taking Syria off the list but were overruled. Damascus also remains on a list of countries the United States considers sponsor "terrorism."

Mr. Mubarak said the two men did not touch the drugs issue but focussed on peace. "I hope God willing the peace talks will resume and there will be peace this year without any delay."

COLUMN

U.S.: cocaine now truly global scourge

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States said that rampant cocaine use has become a global scourge, undermining and corrupting governments and destroying lives almost everywhere. In its report to Congress on the international narcotics trade in 1993, the State Department said heroin production and trafficking was also increasing, opening new marketing opportunities for international criminals. Still, crack cocaine, which first flooded the streets of U.S. cities in the 1980s, remained the number one threat, spreading its poison ever wider, the department said in its annual roundup on the international narcotic trade.

"Rampant cocaine use, which was once a peculiarly American phenomena, is now a worldwide scourge," the report said. "From Spain to Russia to Vietnam and Zimbabwe, the 'white poison of the Andes' has surfaced as a potential threat to countries unprepared to deal with a new drugs epidemic."

The report alleged that drug corruption had infected officials and institutions in a long list of countries, including Bolivia, Burma, Kenya, Lebanon, Nigeria, Panama, Syria, Thailand, Venezuela and Zambia. The Panamanian government, brought to power by the 1989 U.S. invasion that ousted strongman and convicted drug trafficker Manuel Noriega, "continued to show a disappointing lack of political will to address drug corruption and money laundering concerns," the report said.

Bhutto visits father's grave

LARKANA, Pakistan (R) — Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, ignoring a bitter family feud, visited the grave of her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on the 15th anniversary of the ex-premier's execution.

The prime minister's estranged mother, Nusrat Bhutto, chose not to visit the grave for the first time since her husband was hanged by military President Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq. Benazir's brother Murtaza was not allowed out of jail for the anniversary. "Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is alive in the hearts of the people of Pakistan," the prime minister told a rally of admirers of her father, toppled by General Zia in a military coup in 1977 and executed two years later. "After 17 years they have not been able to end Bhuttoism," Ms. Bhutto said of her political opponents. "It will not end until poverty ends in Pakistan." Ms. Bhutto strewed rose petals on her father's grave in his tiny ancestral village of Naudero and raised her hands in prayer inside the heavily guarded family burial ground. She said she planned to build a memorial to her father in the poverty-stricken village at a cost of 280 million rupees (\$9.3 million). She did not say where the money would come from.

Mr. Bhutto said the two men did not touch the drugs issue but focussed on peace. "I hope God willing the peace talks will resume and there will be peace this year without any delay."

Police re-examine suicide of U.K. peer's wife

LONDON (R) — British police reopened an investigation into the last hours of the wife of a government minister, whose death was recorded by an inquest as suicide. Lord Cairness, 45, stepped down as junior transport minister the day after his wife died from shotgun wounds in the mouth in the family home near Oxford, west of London, in January, her husband and daughter were downstairs playing cards, according to evidence given at the inquest. Lady Cairness's family put pressure on police to re-examine the case based on evidence suggesting a difference of three hours between the time of the shooting given by her husband and two witnesses. "As a result of some concerns raised by members of the family, police are carrying out a review of some issues which did not come out in the inquest," detective Tom Morrison said. Lord Cairness told the inquest in January that his wife Diana was upset about her health and had threatened suicide many times before. He said he last saw her alive at 6.20 p.m. on Jan. 8. But a neighbour said she heard a loud bang that sounded like a gunshot at 3 p.m. a doctor said he was called at 6 p.m. and arrived half an hour later at the couple's home. He said Lady Cairness appeared to have been dead for three hours.

Returnees have conflicting agendas, or none at all

By P.V. Vivekanand

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The 26 Palestinian expellees who crossed the King Hussein Bridge to the West Bank on Tuesday took with them, by their own admission, conflicting agendas that epitomise the divisions in the Palestinian ranks.

If Tayseer Arouri, a professor of political science, was going back with the avowed aim of building Palestinian grassroots support for reforms in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Marwan Barghouti, a student leader, went back with a determination to shore up the waning support for Fateh among the two million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Needless to say, support for Fateh, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's powerbase in the PLO, translates into support for the Sept. 13 autonomy accord, signed by the PLO and Israel as the first breakthrough in decades of efforts to make Israeli-Arab peace.

Dr. Arouri was a teacher at the same university, Bir Zeit, where Mr. Barghouti was a student leader. The professor, 48, was expelled in August 1989, nearly two years into the Palestinian intifada, while Mr. Barghouti, 34, was expelled in May 1987, a few months before the anti-

occupation revolt began.

They found themselves on the same side of the fence living as exiles in Jordan until Israel gave them permission to return home. Sharing the same convoy on their way back home and a yearning for a free Palestine is about all the two had in common as their hues squeaked the rickety bridge across the River Jordan.

Although there is little personal animosity between the two, their conflicting paths are bound to cross as they pick up from where they left off when they were expelled and seek to achieve their political objectives.

"The main item on my political agenda is to work for a democratic Palestine," said Dr. Arouri shortly before he left.

The professor is a leading activist of the Palestine People's Party (PPP) which is campaigning for reforms in the PLO and dramatic changes in the way Chairman and Fateh boss Arafat is banding PLO decision-making. He said he was planning to enlist himself with Dr. Haidar Abdul Shafi, former head of the Palestinian peace negotiating team.

Dr. Abdul Shafi, a respected Gaza physician, is spearheading calls from Palestinians in the occupied territories for power-sharing

at the helm of the PLO. While personally not opposing Mr. Arafat, Dr. Abdul Shafi has been insisting that the future of the Palestinian entity could only be secure if the PLO leadership turned more democratic.

But Mr. Barghouti's immediate priorities are different. "No doubt the return of people like me, along with other Fateh activists, will contribute strongly to building up support for Fateh in Palestine," said Mr. Barghouti in an implicit reference to the fact that most of the nearly 50 Palestinians that Israel allowed in its latest "goodwill gesture" were members of Fateh.

The former student leader denied that there were deep divisions in Fateh ranks in the occupied territories resulting from what many Palestinians see as shortcomings in the autonomy accord and the concessions that the PLO had been making in the run-up to the implementation of the agreement.

"There is no basic split in Fateh," asserted Mr. Barghouti. "There may be differences in approaches in how to carry out resistance against the occupation, but those differences are technical and short-lived."

At least six of the young returnees spent their time in exile mostly in Tunis, work-

ing with the various PLO institutions. All are known activists of Fateh.

Israel, ever ready to exploit differences among the Palestinians, appears to have given priority to ensuring that a handful of Palestinians who oppose Mr. Arafat's policy were among those allowed to return home.

According to bigly-informed diplomatic sources, Israeli officials had consulted prominent independent Palestinians from the occupied territories before approving the list or lists of expellees allowed to return home.

The sources said Hanan Asbrawi, who served as spokesperson for the Palestinian delegation to peace talks which was eclipsed by the sudden revelation of the secretly worked out Israel-PLO autonomy accord, and Dr. Abdul Shafi were among those consulted.

"The Israeli idea appears to be aimed at ensuring that Arafat remains on his toes by having to respond to calls for democratic reforms in the PLO coming from Palestinians in the occupied territories," said one of the sources.

"Obviously, having people like Dr. Arouri and others who have become closely familiar with the workings of the PLO and Arafat's way of handling things in the occu-

pled territories is one way of indirectly ensuring that momentum is maintained for the reformist movement," added the source.

Caught in between Arafat loyalists and reformists are the hundreds of non-political village elders expelled by Israel during the early 1970s. Very few of them have any inclination to indulge in politics back at home.

At least eight of those who went back Tuesday are elderly men whose priorities in life have more to do with their families, children and grandchildren and old friends than jumping to the political bandwagon.

"All I want is back to be with my family, my grandchildren whom I have not seen at all," said Rashid Tawabteh, 93, who was expelled in 1971 and lived in Amman since then. "I want nothing to do with politics; I'm too old for that."

Mr. Tawabteh's wife Jazia, now 73, stayed with him for six to eight months every year before returning their home in Beit Fajjar outside Bethlehem to renew her Israeli-issued documents. That was the only way the couple could be together.

"Thank God, our ordeal has ended," said Jazia with a toothless but captivating smile. "We want nothing to do with politics. All we want is a life in tranquillity."

مكتبة عن الأصل